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OF

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THE WORKS

OF

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

WITH A

PREFATORY CHAPTER OF BIOGRAPHICAL CRITICISM

BY

LESLIE STEPHEN.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

HENRY SOTHERAN & CO.,
LONDON: 136 STRAND—36 PICCADILLY.
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THE HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In a Series of Letters.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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[This letter may be considered as a kind of summary of Clarissa's trials, her persecutions, and exemplary conduct hitherto; and of Mr. Lovelace's intrigues, plots, and views, so far as Miss Howe could be supposed to know them, or to guess at them.]

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THE HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, May 9.

I AM a very unhappy man. This lady is said to be one of the sweetest-tempered creatures in the world: and so I thought her. But to me she is one of the most perverse. I never was supposed to be an ill-natured mortal neither. How can it be? I imagined, for a long while, that we were born to make each other happy: but quite the contrary; we really seem to be sent to plague each other.

I will write a comedy, I think: I have a title ready; and that's half the work. *The Quarrelsome Lovers.* 'Twill do. There's something new and striking in it. Yet, more or less, all lovers quarrel. Old Terence has taken notice of that; and observes upon it, that lovers *falling out* occasions lovers *falling in;* and a better understanding of course. 'Tis natural that it should be so. But with us, we fall out so often, without falling in once; and a second quarrel so generally happens before a first is made up; that it is hard to guess what event our loves will be attended with. But perseverance is my glory, and patience my handmaid, when I have in view an object worthy of my attempts. What is there in an easy conquest? Hudibras questions well,

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———What mad lover ever died
To gain a soft and easy bride?
Or, for a lady tender-hearted,
In purling streams, or hemp, departed?

But I will lead to the occasion of this preamble.

I had been out. On my return, meeting Dorcas on the stairs—Your lady in her chamber, Dorcas? In the dining-room, sir: and if ever you hope for an opportunity to come at a letter, it must be now. For at her feet I saw one lie, which, as may be seen by its open fold, she has been reading, with a little parcel of others she is now busied with—all pulled out of her pocket, as I believe: so, sir, you'll know where to find them another time.

I was ready to leap for joy, and instantly resolved to bring forward an expedient which I had held in petto; and entering into the dining-room with an air of transport, I boldly clasped my arms about her, as she sat; she huddling up her papers in her handkerchief all the time; the dropped paper unseen. Oh, my dearest life, a lucky expedient have Mr. Mennell and I hit upon just now. In order to hasten Mrs. Fretchville to quit the house, I have agreed, if you approve of it, to entertain her cook, her housemaid, and two men-servants (about whom she was very solicitous), till you are provided to your mind. And that no accommodations may be wanted, I have consented to take the household linen at an appraisement.

I am to pay down five hundred pounds, and the remainder as soon as the bills can be looked up, and the amount of them adjusted. Thus will you have a charming house entirely ready to receive you. Some of the ladies of my family will soon be with you: they will not permit you long to suspend my happy day. And that nothing may be wanting to gratify your utmost punctilio, I will till then consent to stay here at Mrs. Sinclair's while you reside at your new house; and leave the rest to your own generosity. Oh, my beloved creature, will not this be agreeable to you? I am sure it will—it must—and clasping her closer to me, I gave her a more fervent kiss than ever I had dared to give her

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before. I permitted not my ardour to overcome my discretion, however; for I took care to set my foot upon the letter, and scraped it farther from her, as it were behind her chair.

She was in a passion at the liberty I took. Bowing low, I begged her pardon; and stooping still lower, in the same motion took up the letter, and whipt it into my bosom.

Pox on me for a puppy, a fool, a blockhead, a clumsy varlet, a mere Jack Belford!—I thought myself a much cleverer fellow than I am!—Why could I not have been followed in by Dorcas, who might have taken it up while I addressed her lady?

For here, the letter being unfolded, I could not put it in my bosom without alarming her ears, as my sudden motion did her eyes.—Up she flew in a moment: Traitor! Judas! her eyes flashing lightning, and a perturbation in her eager countenance, so charming!—What have you taken up?—and then, what for both my ears I durst not have done to her, she made no scruple to seize the stolen letter, though in my bosom.

What was to be done on so palpable a detection?—I clasped her hand, which had hold of the ravished paper, between mine: Oh, my beloved creature! said I, can you think I have not *some* curiosity? Is it possible you can be thus for ever employed; and I, loving narrative letter-writing above every other species of writing, and admiring your talent that way, should not (thus upon the dawn of my happiness, as I presume to hope) burn with a desire to be admitted into so sweet a correspondence?

Let go my hand!—stamping with her pretty foot: How dare you, sir!—At this rate, I see—too plainly I see—and more she could not say: but, gasping, was ready to faint with passion and affright; the devil a bit of her accustomed gentleness to be seen in her charming face, or to be heard in her musical voice.

Having gone thus far, loth, very loth was I to lose my prize—once more I got hold of the rumpled-up letter!—*Impudent man!* were her words: stamping again. *For God's sake,* then it was. I let go my prize, lest she should

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faint away: but had the pleasure first to find my hand within both hers, she trying to open my reluctant fingers. How near was my heart at that moment to my hand, throbbing to my fingers' ends, to be thus familiarly, although angrily, treated by the charmer of my soul!

When she had got it in her possession, she flew to the door. I threw myself in her way, shut it, and in the humblest manner besought her to forgive me. And yet do you think the Harlowe-hearted charmer (notwithstanding the agreeable annunciation I came in with) would forgive me?—No, truly; but pushing me rudely from the door, as if I had been nothing [yet do I love to try, so innocently to try, her strength too!], she gained that force through passion, which I had lost through fear, out she shot to her own apartment [thank my stars she could fly no farther!]; and as soon as she entered it, in a passion still, she double-locked and double-bolted herself in. This my comfort, on reflection, that upon a greater offence, it cannot be worse.

I retreated to my own apartment, with my heart full: and my man Will not being near me, gave myself a plaguy knock on the forehead with my double fits.

And now is my charmer shut up from me: refusing to see me, refusing her meals. She resolves *not* to see me; that's more:—never again, if she can help it; and *in the mind she is in*—I hope she has said.

The dear creatures, whenever they quarrel with their humble servants, should always remember this saving clause, that they may not be forsworn.

But thinkest thou that I will not make it the subject of one of my first plots to inform myself of the reason why all this commotion was necessary on so slight an occasion as this would have been, were not the letters that pass between these ladies of a treasonable nature?

—o—

Wednesday Morning.

No admission to breakfast, any more than to supper. I wish this lady is not a simpleton after all.

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I have sent up in Captain Mennell's name.

A message from Captain Mennell, Madam.

It won't do. She is of baby age. She cannot be—a Solomon, I was going to say, in everything. Solomon, Jack, was the wisest man. But didst ever hear who was the wisest woman? I want a comparison for this lady. Cunning women and witches we read of without number. But I fancy *wisdom* never entered into the character of a woman. It is not a requisite of the sex. Women indeed make better sovereigns than men: but why is that?—because the women sovereigns are governed by men; the men sovereigns by women.—Charming, by my soul! For hence we guess at the rudder by which both are steered.

But to putting wisdom out of the question, and to take *cunning* in; that is to say, to consider woman *as* a woman; what shall we do, if this lady has something extraordinary in her head? Repeated charges has she given to Wilson, by a particular messenger, to send any letter directed for her the moment it comes.

I must keep a good look-out. She is not now afraid of her brother's plot. I shan't be at all surprised if Singleton calls upon Miss Howe, as the only person who *knows*, or is *likely to know*, where Miss Harlowe is; pretending to have affairs of importance, and of particular service to her, if he can but be admitted to her speech—Of compromise, who knows, from her brother?

Then will Miss Howe warn her to keep close. Then will my protection be again necessary. This will do, I believe. Anything from Miss Howe must.

Joseph Leman is a vile fellow with her, and my implement. Joseph, *honest* Joseph, as I call him, may hang himself. I have played him off enough, and have very little further use for him. No need to wear one plot to the stumps, when I can find new ones every hour.

Nor blame me for the use I make of my talents. Who that hath such, will let 'em be idle?

Well then I will find a Singleton; that's all I have to do.

Instantly find one!—Will!

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Sir—

This moment call me hither thy cousin Paul Wheatly, ust come from sea, whom thou wert recommending to my service, if I were to marry and keep a pleasure-boat.

Presto—Will's gone—Paul will be here presently. Presently to Mrs. Howe's. If Paul be Singleton's mate, coming from his captain, it will do as well as if it were Singleton himself.

Sally, a little devil, often reproaches me with the slowness of my proceedings. But in a play does not the principal entertainment lie in the *first four acts?* Is not all in a manner over when you come to the *fifth?* And what a vulture of a man must he be, who souses upon his prey, and in the same moment trusses and devours?

But to own the truth. I have overplotted myself. To make my work secure, as I thought, I have frighted the dear creature with the sight of my four Hottentots, and I shall be a long time, I doubt, before I can recover my lost ground. And then this cursed family at Harlowe Place have made her out of humour with *me*, with *herself*, and with *all the world*, but Miss Howe, who no doubt is continually adding difficulties to my other difficulties.

I am very unwilling to have recourse to measures which these demons below are continually urging me to take; because I am sure that at last I shall be brought to make her legally mine.

One complete trial over, and I think I will do her noble justice.

Well, Paul's gone—gone already—has all his lessons. A notable fellow!—Lord W.'s necessary-man was Paul before he went to sea. A more sensible rogue Paul than Joseph! Not such a pretender to piety neither as the other. At what a price have I bought that Joseph! I believe I must punish the rascal at last: but must let him marry first: then (though that may be punishment enough) I shall punish two at once in the man and his wife. And how richly does Betty deserve punishment for her behaviour to my goddess!

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But now I hear the rusty hinges of my beloved's door give me creaking invitation. My heart creaks and throbs with respondent trepidations. Whimsical enough, though! for what relation has a lover's heart to a rusty pair of hinges? But they are the hinges that open and shut the door of my beloved's bed-chamber. Relation enough in that.

I hear not the door shut again. I shall receive her commands I hope anon. What signifies her keeping me thus at a distance? she must be mine, let me do or offer what I will. Courage whenever I assume, all is over: for, should she think of escaping from hence, whither can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her. Her uncles will not entertain her. Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but me—is entirely a stranger to the town. And what then is the matter with me, that I should be thus unaccountably over-awed and tyrannised over by a dear creature who wants only to know how impossible it is that she should escape me, in order to be as humble to me as she is to her persecuting relations!

Should I even make the grand attempt, and fail, and should she hate me for it, her hatred can be but temporary. She has already incurred the censure of the world. She must therefore choose to be mine, for the sake of soldering up her reputation in the eye of that impudent world. For who that knows me, and knows that she has been in my power, though but for twenty-four hours, will think her spotless as to fact, let her inclination be what it will? And then *human nature* is such a well-known rogue, that every man and woman judges by what each knows of him or herself, that *inclination* is no more to be trusted, where an opportunity is given, than *I* am; especially where a woman, young and blooming, loves a man well enough to go off with him; for such will be the world's construction in the present case.

She calls her maid Dorcas. No doubt, that I may hear her harmonious voice, and to give me an opportunity to pour out my soul at her feet; to renew all my vows; and

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to receive her pardon for the past offence: and then, with what pleasure shall I begin upon a new score, and afterwards wipe out that; and begin another, and another, till the *last* offence passes; and there can be *no other!* And once, after that, to be forgiven, will be to be forgiven for ever.

THE door is again shut. Dorcas tells me that her lady denies to admit me to dine with her; a favour I had ordered the wench to beseech her to grant me, the next time she saw her—not uncivilly, however, denies—coming-to by degrees! Nothing but the last offence, the honest wench tells me, in the language of her principals below, will do with her. The last offence is meditating. Yet this vile recreant heart of mine plays me booty.

But here I conclude; though the tyranness leaves me nothing to do but to read, write, and fret.

Subscription is formal between us. Besides, I am so much hers, that I cannot say how much I am thine or any other person's.

—o—

LETTER II.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday, May 9.

IF, my dear, you approve of the application to my uncle Harlowe, I wish it may be made as soon as possible. We are quite out again. I have shut myself up from him. The offence indeed not *very* great—and yet it is too. He had like to have got a letter. One of yours. But never will I write again, or re-peruse my papers, in an apartment where he thinks himself entitled to come. He did not read a line of it. Indeed he did not. So don't be uneasy. And depend upon future caution.

Thus it was. The sun being upon my closet, and Mr. Lovelace abroad—

She then gives Miss Howe an account of his coming by

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surprise upon her: of his fluttering speech: of his bold address: of her struggle with him for the letter, &c.

And now, my dear, *proceeds she,* I am more and more convinced that I am too much in his power to make it prudent to stay with him. And if my friends *will* but give me hope, I will resolve to abandon him for ever.

Oh, my dear! he is a fierce, a foolish, an insolent creature! —And in truth I hardly expect that we *can* accommodate. How much unhappier am I already with him than my mother ever was with my father after marriage! since (and that without any reason, any pretence in the world for it) he is for breaking my spirit *before* I am his, and while I am, or ought to be [oh, my folly, that I am not!] in my own power.

Till I can know whether my friends will give me hope or not, I must do what I never studied to do before in any case; that is, try to keep this difference open: and yet it will make me look *little in my own eyes;* because I shall mean by it more than I can own. But this is one of the consequences of a step I shall ever deplore! The natural fruits of all engagements, where the minds are unpaired—*dispaired,* in my case, may I say.

Let this evermore be my caution to individuals of my sex —Guard your eye: 'twill ever be in a combination against your judgment. If there are two parts to be taken, it will for ever, traitor as it is, take the wrong one.

If you ask me, my dear, how this caution befits me? let me tell you a secret which I have but very lately found out upon self-examination, although you seem to have made the discovery long ago: That had not my foolish eye been too much attached, I had not taken the pains to attempt, so officiously as I did, the prevention of mischief between him and some of my family, which first induced the correspondence between us, and was the occasion of bringing the apprehended mischief with double weight upon himself. My vanity and conceit, as far as I know, might have part in the inconsiderate measure: for does it not look as if I thought myself more capable of obviating difficulties than anybody else of my family?

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But you must not, my dear, suppose my heart to be still a confederate with my eye. That deluded eye now clearly sees its fault, and the misled heart despises it for it. Hence the application I am making to my uncle: hence it is that I can say (I think truly) that I would atone for my fault at any rate, even by the sacrifice of a limb or two, if that would do.

Adieu, my dearest friend!—May your heart never know the hundredth part of the pain mine at present feels! prays

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER III.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Wednesday, May 10.

I *WILL* write! No *man* shall write for me.* No *woman* shall hinder me from writing. Surely I am of age to distinguish between reason and caprice. I am not writing to a man, am I?—If I were carrying on a correspondence with a fellow of whom my mother disapproved, and whom it might be improper for me to encourage, my own honour and my duty would engage my obedience. But as the case is so widely different, not a word more on this subject, I beseech you!

I much approve of your resolution to leave this wretch, if you can make it up with your uncle.

I hate the man—most heartily do I hate him, for his teasing ways. The very reading of your account of them teases me almost as much as they can you. May you have encouragement to fly the foolish wretch!

I have other reasons to wish you may: for I have just made an acquaintance with one who knows a vast deal of his private history. The man is really a villain, my dear! an execrable one! if all be true that I have heard! And yet I am promised *other* particulars. I do assure you, my dear

* Clarissa proposes *Mr. Hickman* to write for Miss Howe. See vol. ii. Letter LXXXVIII., paragraph 5, and ult.

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friend, that had he a dozen lives, he might have forfeited them all, and been dead *twenty crimes* ago.

If ever you condescend to talk familiarly with him again, ask him after Miss Betterton, and what became of her. And if he shuffle and prevaricate as to her, question him about Miss Lockyer.—Oh, my dear, the man's a villain!

I will have your uncle sounded, as you desire, and that out of hand. But yet I am afraid of the success; and this for several reasons. 'Tis hard to say what the sacrifice of your estate would do with some people: and yet I must not, when it comes to the test, permit you to make it.

As your Hannah continues ill, I would advise you to try to attach Dorcas to your interest. Have you not been impoliticly shy of her?

I wish you could come at some of his letters. Surely a man of his negligent character cannot be always guarded. If *he be*, and if you cannot engage *your* servant, I shall suspect them both. Let him be called upon at a short warning when he is writing, or when he has papers lying about, and so surprise him into negligence.

Such inquiries, I know, are of the same nature with those we make at an inn in travelling, when we look into every corner and closet, for fear of a villain; yet should be frighted out of our wits, were we to find one. But 'tis better to detect such a one when awake and up, than to be attacked by him when in bed and asleep.

I am glad you have your clothes. But no money! No books but a *Spira*, a *Drexelius*, and a *Practice of Piety!* Those who sent the latter ought to have kept it for themselves.—But I must hurry myself from this subject.

You have exceedingly alarmed me by what you hint of his attempt to get one of my letters. I am assured by my new informant, that he is the head of a gang of wretches (those he brought you among, no doubt, were some of them) who join together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one another afterwards by violence; and were he to come at the knowledge of the freedoms I take with him, I should be afraid to stir out without a guard.

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I am sorry to tell you, that I have reason to think that your brother has not laid aside his foolish plot. A sunburnt, sailor-looking fellow was with me just now, pretending great service to you from Captain Singleton, could he be admitted to your speech. I pleaded ignorance as to the place of your abode. The fellow was too well instructed for me to get anything out of him.

I wept for two hours incessantly on reading yours, which enclosed that from your cousin Morden.* My dearest creature, do not desert yourself. Let your Anna Howe obey the call of that friendship which has united us as one soul, and endeavour to give you consolation.

I wonder not at the melancholy reflections you so often cast upon yourself in your letters, for the step you have been forced upon on one hand, and tricked into on the other. A strange fatality! *As if it were designed to show the vanity of all human prudence.* I wish, my dear, as you hint, that both you and I have not *too much prided ourselves in a perhaps too conscious superiority over others.* But I will stop—how apt are weak minds to look out for judgments in any extraordinary event? 'Tis so far right, that it is better, and safer, and juster, to arraign ourselves, or our dearest friends, than Providence; which must always have wise ends to answer in its dispensations.

But do not talk, as in one of your former, of being a warning *only*†—you will be as excellent an example as ever you hoped to be, as well as a warning: and that will make your story, to all that shall come to know it, of double efficacy: for were it that such a merit as yours could not ensure to herself noble and generous usage from a libertine heart, who will expect any tolerable behaviour from men of his character?

If you think yourself inexcusable for taking a step that put you into the way of delusion, *without any intention to go off with him,* what must those giddy creatures think of themselves, who, without half your provocations and inducements, and without any regard to decorum, leap walls, drop

* See Letter XCVI. of vol. ii. † See Letter XLIII. of vol. ii.

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from windows, and steal away from their parents' house to the seducer's bed, in the same day?

Again, if you are so ready to accuse yourself for dispensing with the prohibitions of the most unreasonable parents, which yet were but half-prohibitions at first, what ought those to do who wilfully shut their ears to the advice of the most reasonable; and that perhaps where apparent ruin, or *undoubted inconvenience*, is the consequence of the *predetermined* rashness?

And lastly, to all who will know your story, you will be an excellent *example* of watchfulness, and of that caution and reserve by which a prudent person, who has been supposed to be a little misled, endeavours to mend her error; and never once losing sight of her duty, does all in her power to recover the path she has been rather driven out of than chosen to swerve from.

Come, come, my dearest friend, consider but these things; and steadily, without desponding, pursue your earnest purposes to amend what you think has been amiss; and it may not be a misfortune in the end that you have erred; especially as so little of your will was in your error.

And indeed I must say that I use the words *misled*, and *error*, and such-like, only in compliment to your own too ready self-accusations, and to the opinion of one to whom I owe duty: for I think in my conscience, that every part of your conduct is defensible: and that those only are blamable who have no other way to clear themselves but by condemning you.

I expect, however, that such melancholy reflections as drop from your pen but too often will mingle with all your future pleasures, were you to marry Lovelace, and were he to make the best of husbands.

You was immensely happy, above the happiness of a mortal creature, before you knew him: everybody almost worshipped you: envy itself, which has of late reared up its venomous head against you, was awed by your superior worthiness into silence and admiration. You was the soul of every company where you visited. Your elders have I

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seen declining to offer their opinions upon a subject till you had delivered yours; often, to save themselves the mortification of retracting *theirs*, when they heard *yours*. Yet in all this, your sweetness of manners, your humility and affability, caused the subscription every one made to your sentiments, and to your superiority, to be equally unfeigned and unhesitating; for they saw that their applause, and the preference they gave you to themselves, subjected not themselves to insults, nor exalted you into any visible triumph over them; for you had always something to say on every point you carried that raised the yielding heart, and left every one pleased and satisfied with themselves, though they carried not off the palm.

Your works were showed or referred to wherever fine works were talked of. Nobody had any but an inferior and secondhand praise for diligence, for economy, for reading, for writing, for memory, for facility in learning everything laudable, and even for the more envied graces of person and dress, and an all-surpassing elegance in both, where you were known, and those subjects talked of.

The poor blessed you every step you trod: the rich thought you their honour, and took a pride that they were not obliged to descend from their own class for an example that did credit to it.

Though all men wished for you, and sought you, young as you were; yet had not those who were brought to address you been encouraged out of sordid and spiteful views, not one of them would have dared to lift up his eyes to you.

Thus happy in all about you, thus making happy all within your circle, could you think that nothing would happen to you, to convince you *that you were not to be exempted from the common lot?*—To convince you *that you were not absolutely perfect;* and that *you must not expect to pass through life without trial, temptation, and misfortune?*

Indeed it must be owned that no trial, no temptation, worthy of your virtue, and of your prudence, could well have attacked you sooner, because of your tender years, nor

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more effectually than those heavy ones under which you struggle; since it must be allowed that your equanimity and foresight made you superior to common accidents; for are not most of the troubles that fall to the lot of common mortals brought upon themselves either by their *too large desires*, or *too little deserts?*—Cases, both, from which you stood exempt.—It was therefore to be some *man*, or some *worse spirit in the shape of one*, that, formed on purpose, was to be sent to invade you; while as many other such spirits as there are persons in your family were permitted to take possession, severally, in one dark hour, of the heart of every one of it, there to sit perching perhaps, and directing every motion to the motions of the seducer without, in order to irritate, to provoke, to push you forward *to meet him.*

Upon the whole, there seems, as I have often said, to have been a kind of fate in your error, if it *were* an error; and this perhaps admitted *for the sake of a better example to be collected from your* SUFFERINGS, *than could have been given, had you never erred:* for, my dear, the time of ADVERSITY *is your* SHINING-TIME. I see it evidently, that adversity must call forth graces and beauties which could not have been brought to light in a run of that prosperous fortune which attended you from your cradle till now; admirably as you *became*, and, as we all thought, greatly as you *deserved* that prosperity.

All the matter is, the trial must be grievous to you. It is to *me:* it is to all who love you, and looked upon you as one set aloft to be admired and imitated, and not as a mark, as you have lately found, for envy to shoot its shafts at.

Let what I have written above have its due weight with you, my dear; and then, as warm imaginations are not without a mixture of enthusiasm, your Anna Howe, who, on reperusal of it, imagines it to be in a style superior to her usual style, will be ready to flatter herself that she has been in a manner inspired with the hints that have comforted and raised the dejected heart of her suffering friend; who from such hard trials, in a bloom so tender, may find at times her spirits sunk too low to enable her to pervade

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the surrounding darkness which conceals from her the hopeful dawning of the better day which awaits her.

I will add no more at present, than that I am

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER IV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, May 12.

I MUST be silent, my exalted friend, under praises that oppress my heart with a consciousness of not deserving them; at the same time that the generous design of those praises raises and comforts it: for it is a charming thing to stand high in the opinion of those we love; and to find that there are souls that can carry their friendships beyond accidents, beyond body and ties of blood. Whatever, my dearest creature, is *my* shining-time, the time of a *friend's* adversity is *yours*. And it would be almost a fault in me to regret those afflictions which give you an opportunity so gloriously to exert those qualities, which not only ennoble our sex, but dignify human nature.

But let me proceed to subjects less agreeable.

I am sorry you have reason to think Singleton's projects are not at an end. But who knows what the sailor had to propose?—Yet had any good been intended me, this method would hardly have been fallen upon.

Depend upon it, my dear, your letters shall be safe.

I have made a handle of Mr. Lovelace's bold attempt and freedom, as I told you I would, to keep him ever since at a distance, that I may have an opportunity to see the success of the application to my uncle, and to be at liberty to embrace any favourable overtures that may arise from it. Yet he has been very importunate, and twice brought Mr. Mennell from Mrs. Fretchville to talk about the house. —*If I should be obliged to make up with him again, I shall think I am always doing myself a spite.*

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As to what you mention of his newly-detected crimes; and your advice to attach Dorcas to my interest; and to come at some of his letters; these things will require more or less of my attention, as I may hope favour or not from my uncle Harlowe.

I am sorry that my poor Hannah continues ill. Pray, my dear, inform yourself, and let me know, whether she wants anything that befits her case.

I will not close this letter till to-morrow is over; for I am resolved to go to church; and this as well for the sake of my duty, as to see if I am at liberty to go out when I please without being attended or accompanied.

—o—

Sunday, May 14.

I HAVE not been able to avoid a short debate with Mr. Lovelace. I had ordered a coach to the door. When I had notice that it was come, I went out of my chamber to go to it; but met him dressed on the stairs-head, with a book in his hand, but without his hat and sword. He asked, with an air very solemn, yet respectful, if I were going abroad. I told him I was. He desired leave to attend me, if I were going to church. I refused him. And then he complained heavily of my treatment of him; and declared that he would not live such another week as the past, for the world.

I owned to him very frankly, that I had made an application to my friends; and that I was resolved to keep myself to myself till I knew the issue of it.

He coloured, and seemed surprised. But checking himself in something he was going to say, he pleaded my danger from Singleton, and again desired to attend me.

And then he told me that Mrs. Fretchville had desired to continue a fortnight longer in the house. She found, said he, that I was unable to determine about entering upon it; and now who knows *when* such a vapourish creature will come to a resolution? This, Madam, has been an unhappy week; for had I not stood upon such bad terms

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with you, *you might have been now mistress of that house;* and probably had my cousin Montague, if not Lady Betty, actually with you.

And so, sir, taking all you say for granted, your cousin Montague cannot come to Mrs. Sinclair's? What, pray, is her objection to Mrs. Sinclair's? Is this house fit for me to live in a month or two, and not fit for any of your relations for a few days?—And Mrs. Fretchville has *taken more time too!*—Then, pushing by him, I hurried downstairs.

He called to Dorcas to bring him his sword and hat; and following me down into the passage, placed himself between me and the door; and again desired leave to attend me.

Mrs. Sinclair came out at that instant, and asked me if I did not choose a dish of chocolate?

I wish, Mrs. Sinclair, said I, you would take this man in with you to your chocolate. I don't know whether I am at liberty to stir out without his leave or not.

Then turning to him, I asked if he kept me there his prisoner?

Dorcas just then bringing him his sword and hat, he opened the street door, and taking my reluctant hand, led me, in a very obsequious manner, to the coach. People passing by, stopped, stared, and whispered—But he is so graceful in his person and dress that he generally takes every eye.

I was uneasy to be so gazed at; and he stepped in after me, and the coachman drove to St. Paul's.

He was very full of assiduities all the way; while I was as reserved as possible: and when I returned, dined, as I had done the greatest part of the week, by myself.

He told me, upon my resolving to do so, that although he would continue his passive observance till I knew the issue of my application, yet I must expect that *then* I should not rest one moment till I had fixed his happy day: for that his very soul was fretted with my slights, resentments, and delays.

A wretch! when can I say, to my infinite regret, on a *double* account, that all he complains of is owing to himself!

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Oh, that I may have good tidings from my uncle!

Adieu, my dearest friend—This shall lie ready for an exchange (as I hope for one to-morrow from you) that will decide, as I may say, the destiny of

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER V.

Miss Howe to Mrs. Judith Norton.

Thursday, May 11.

GOOD MRS. NORTON,—Cannot you, without naming *me* as an adviser, who am hated by the family, contrive a way to let Mrs. Harlowe know that in an accidental conversation with me, you had been assured that my beloved friend pines after a reconciliation with her relations? That she has hitherto, in hopes of it, refused to enter into any obligation that shall be in the least a hindrance to it: that she would fain avoid giving Mr. Lovelace a right to make her family uneasy in relation to her grandfather's estate: that all she wishes for still is to be indulged in her choice of a single life, and on that condition, would make her father's pleasure hers with regard to that estate: that Mr. Lovelace is continually pressing her to marry him; and all his friends likewise: but that I am sure she has so little liking to the man, because of his faulty morals, and of the antipathy of her relations to him, that if she had any hope given her of a reconciliation, she would forego all thoughts of him, and put herself into her father's protection. But that their resolution must be speedy; for otherwise she would find herself obliged to give way to his pressing entreaties; and it might then be out of her power to prevent disagreeable litigations.

I do assure you, Mrs. Norton, upon my honour, that our dearest friend knows nothing of this procedure of mine: and therefore it is proper to acquaint you, in confidence, with my grounds for it.—These are they:

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She had desired me to let Mr. Hickman drop hints to the above effect to her uncle Harlowe; but indirectly, as from *himself*, lest if the application should not be attended with success, and Mr. Lovelace (who already takes it ill that he has so little of her favour) come to know it, she may be deprived of *every* protection, and be perhaps subjected to great inconveniences from so haughty a spirit.

Having this authority from her, and being very solicitous about the success of the application, I thought that if the weight of so good a wife, mother, and sister, as Mrs. Harlowe is known to be, were thrown into the same scale with that of Mr. John Harlowe (supposing he *could* be engaged), it could hardly fail of making a due impression.

Mr. Hickman will see Mr. John Harlowe to-morrow: by that time you may see Mrs. Harlowe. If Mr. Hickman finds the old gentleman favourable, he will tell him that you will have seen Mrs. Harlowe upon the same account; and will advise him to join in consultation with her how best to proceed to melt the most obdurate heart in the world.

This is the fair state of the matter, and my true motive for writing to you. I leave all, therefore, to your discretion; and most heartily wish success to it; being of opinion that Mr. Lovelace cannot possibly deserve our admirable friend: nor indeed know I the man who does.

Pray acquaint me by a line of the result of your interposition. If it prove not such as may be reasonably hoped for, our dear friend shall know nothing of this step from me; and pray let her not from you. For in that case it would only give deeper grief to a heart already too much afflicted. I am, dear and worthy Mrs. Norton,

Your true friend,

ANNA HOWE.

—9—

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LETTER VI.

Mrs. Norton to Miss Howe.

Saturday, May 13.

DEAR MADAM,—My heart is almost broken to be obliged to let you know, that such is the situation of things in the family of my ever-dear Miss Harlowe, that there can be at present no success expected from any application in her favour. Her poor mother is to be pitied. I have a most affecting letter from her; but must not communicate it to you; and she forbids me to let it be known that she writes upon the subject; although she is compelled, as it were, to do it for the ease of her own heart. I mention it therefore in confidence.

I hope in God that my beloved young lady has preserved her honour inviolate. I hope there is not a man breathing who could attempt a sacrilege so detestable. I have no apprehension of a failure in a virtue so established. God for ever keep so pure a heart out of the reach of surprises and violence! Ease, dear Madam, I beseech you, my over anxious heart, by one line, by the bearer, although but *one* line, to acquaint me (as surely you can) that her honour is unsullied.—If it be not, adieu to all the comforts this life can give: since none will it be able to afford

To the poor

JUDITH NORTON.

—o—

LETTER VII.

Miss Howe to Mrs. Judith Norton.

Saturday Evening, May 13.

DEAR, GOOD WOMAN,—Your beloved's honour is inviolate!—*Must* be inviolate! and *will* be so, in spite of men and devils. Could I have had hope of a reconciliation, all my view was, that she should not have had this man.—All that

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can be said now is, she must run the risk of a bad husband: she of whom no man living is worthy!

You pity her mother—so do not *I!* I pity no mother that puts it out of her power to show maternal love and humanity, in order to patch up for herself a precarious and sorry quiet, which every blast of wind shall disturb.

I hate tyrants in every form and shape: but paternal and maternal tyrants are the worst of all: for they can have no bowels.

I repeat, that I pity *none* of them. Our beloved friend *only* deserves pity. She had never been in the hands of this man, but for them. She is quite blameless. You don't know all her story. Were I to tell you that she had no intention to go off with this man, it would avail her nothing. It would only serve to condemn, with those who drove her to extremities, *him* who now must be her refuge. I am

Your sincere friend and servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER VIII.

Mrs. Harlowe to Mrs. Norton.

[Not communicated till the letters came to be collected.]

Saturday, May 13.

I RETURN an answer in writing, as I promised, to your communication. But take no notice either to my Bella's Betty (who I understand sometimes visits you), or to the poor wretch herself, nor to anybody, that I do write. I charge you don't. My heart is full: writing may give some vent to my griefs, and perhaps I may write what lies most upon my heart, without confining myself strictly to the present subject.

You know how dear this ungrateful creature ever was to us all. You know how sincerely we joined with every one of those who ever had seen her, or conversed with her, to praise and admire her; and exceeded in our praise even the

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bounds of that modesty which, because she was our own, should have restrained us; being of opinion that to have been silent in the praise of so apparent a merit must rather have argued blindness or affectation in us, than that we should incur the censure of vain partiality to our own.

When therefore anybody congratulated us on such a daughter, we received their congratulations without any diminution. If it was said you are happy in this child! we owned that no parents ever were happier in a child. If, more particularly, they praised her dutiful behaviour to us, we said she knew not how to offend. If it was said, Miss Clarissa Harlowe has a wit and penetration beyond her years; we, instead of disallowing it, would add—and a judgment no less extraordinary than her wit. If her prudence was praised, and a *forethought*, which every one saw supplied what only *years* and *experience* gave to others —nobody need to scruple taking lessons from Clarissa Harlowe, was our proud answer.

Forgive me, oh forgive me, my dear Norton.—But I know you will; for yours, when good, was this child, and your glory as well as mine.

But have you not heard strangers, as she passed to and from church, stop to praise the angel of a creature, as they called her; when it was enough for those who knew who she was, to cry, *Why, it is Miss Clarissa Harlowe!*—as if everybody were obliged to know, or to have heard of Clarissa Harlowe, and of her excellences. While, *accustomed to praise*, it was too *familiar to her*, to cause her to alter either her look or her pace.

For my own part, I could not stifle a pleasure that had perhaps a faulty vanity for its foundation, whenever I was spoken of, or addressed to, as the mother of so sweet a child. Mr. Harlowe and I, all the time, loving each other the better for the share each had in such a daughter.

Still, still indulge the fond, the overflowing heart of a mother! I could dwell for ever upon the remembrance of what she *was*, would but that remembrance banish from my mind what she *is!*

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In *her* bosom, young as she was, could I repose all my griefs—sure of receiving from *her* prudence advice as well as comfort; and both insinuated in so humble, in so dutiful a manner, that it was impossible to take those exceptions which the distance of years and character between a mother and a daughter would have made one apprehensive of from any other daughter. She was our glory when abroad, our delight when at home. Everybody was even covetous of her company; and we grudged her to our brothers Harlowe, and to our sister and brother Hervey. No other contention among us, then, but who should be next favoured by her. No chiding ever knew she from us, but the chiding of lovers, when she was for shutting herself up too long together from us, in the pursuit of those charming amusements and useful employments, for which, however, the whole family was the better.

Our other children had reason (good children as they always were) to think themselves neglected. But they likewise were so sensible of their sister's superiority, and of the honour she reflected upon the whole family, that they confessed themselves eclipsed, without envying the eclipser. Indeed there was not anybody so equal with her, in their own opinions, as to envy what all aspired but to emulate. The dear creature, you know, my Norton, gave an eminence to us all!

Then her acquirements. Her skill in music, her fine needle-works, her elegance in dress; for which she was so much admired, that the neighbouring ladies used to say that they need not fetch fashions from London; since whatever Miss Clarissa Harlowe wore was the best fashion, because her choice of *natural* beauties set those of *art* far behind them. Her genteel ease, and fine turn of person; her deep reading, and these, joined to her open manners, and her cheerful modesty—Oh, my good Norton, what a sweet child was *once* my Clary Harlowe!

This, and more, *you* knew her to be; for many of her excellences were owing to yourself; and with the milk you gave her, you gave her what no other nurse in the world could give her.

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And do you think, my worthy woman, do you think that the wilful lapse of such a child is to be forgiven? Can she herself think that she deserves not the severest punishment for the abuse of such talents as were intrusted to her?

Her fault was a fault of premeditation, of cunning, of contrivance. She has deceived everybody's expectations. Her whole sex, as well as the family she sprung from, is disgraced by it.

Would anybody ever have believed that such a young creature as this, who had by her advice saved even her overlively friend from marrying a fop and a libertine, would herself have gone off with one of the vilest and most notorious of libertines? A man whose character she knew; and knew it to be worse than the character of him from whom she saved her friend; a man against whom she was warned; one who had her brother's life in his hands; and who constantly set our whole family at defiance.

Think for me, my good Norton; think what my unhappiness must be both as a wife and a mother. What restless days, what sleepless nights; yet my own rankling anguish endeavoured to be smoothed over, to soften the anguish of fiercer spirits, and to keep them from blazing out to further mischief! Oh, this naughty, naughty girl, who *knew* so well what she did; and who could look so far into consequences, that we thought she would have died rather than have done as she has done!

Her known character for prudence leaves her absolutely without excuse. How then can I offer to plead for her, if through motherly indulgence, I would forgive her myself? —And have we not moreover suffered all the disgrace that *can* befall us? Has not she?

If *now* she has so little liking to his morals, had she not reason *before* to have *as* little? Or has she suffered by them in her own person?—Oh, my good woman, I doubt—I doubt—Will not the character of the man make one doubt an angel, if once in his power? The world will think the worst. I am told it does. So likewise her father fears; her brother hears; and what can *I* do.

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Our *antipathy* to him she knew before, as well as his character. These therefore cannot be *new motives* without a *new reason*.—Oh, my dear Mrs. Norton, how shall *I*, how can *you*, support ourselves under the apprehensions to which these thoughts lead!

He continually pressing her, you say, *to marry him: his friends likewise.* She has reason, no doubt she has reason for this application to us: and her crime is glossed over, to bring her to us with new disgrace! Whither, whither, does one guilty step lead the misguided heart!—And now, truly, to save a stubborn spirit, we are only to be *sounded*, that the application may be occasionally retracted or denied!

Upon the whole: were I inclined to plead for her, it is *now* the most improper of all times. *Now* that my brother Harlowe has discouraged (as he last night came hither on purpose to tell us) Mr. Hickman's insinuated application; and been applauded for it. *Now*, that my brother Antony is intending to carry his great fortune, through her fault, into another family:—she expecting, no doubt, herself to be put into her grandfather's estate, in consequence of a reconciliation, and as a reward for her fault: and insisting still upon the same terms which she offered before, and which were rejected—Not through my fault, I am sure, rejected!

From all these things you will return such an answer as the case requires. It might cost me the peace of my whole life, at this time, to move for her. God forgive her! If I do, nobody else will. And let it, for your own sake, as well as mine, be a secret that you and I have entered upon this subject. And I desire you not to touch upon it again but by particular permission: for, oh, my dear, good woman, it sets my heart a bleeding in as many streams as there are veins in it!

Yet think me not impenetrable by a proper contrition and remorse—But what a torment is it to have a will without a power!

Adieu! adieu! God give us both comfort; and to the *once* dear—the *ever*-dear creature (for can a mother for-

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get her child?) repentance, deep repentance! and as little suffering as may befit His blessed will, and her grievous fault, prays

Your real friend,

CHARLOTTE HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER IX.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Sunday, May 14.

How it is now, my dear, between you and Mr. Lovelace, I cannot tell. But wicked as the man is, I am afraid he must be your lord and master.

I called him by several very hard names in my last. I had but just heard of some of his vilenesses when I sat down to write; so my indignation was raised. But on inquiry and recollection, I find that the facts laid to his charge were all of them committed some time ago—not since he has had *strong* hopes of your favour.

This is saying something for him. His generous behaviour to the innkeeper's daughter is a more recent instance to his credit; to say nothing of the universal good character he has as a kind landlord. And then I approve much of the motion he made to put you in possession of Mrs. Fretchville's house, while he continues at the other widow's, till you agree that one house should hold you. I wish this were done. Be sure you embrace this offer (if you do not soon meet at the altar), and get one of his cousins with you.

Were you once married, I should think you cannot be very unhappy, though you may not be so happy with him as you deserve to be. The stake he has in his country, and his reversions; the care he takes of his affairs; his freedom from obligation; nay, his pride, with your merit, must be a tolerable security for you, I should think. Though particulars of his wickedness, as they come to my knowledge, hurt and incense me; yet, after all, when I give myself time

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to reflect, all that I have heard of him to his disadvantage was comprehended in the general character given of him long ago by Lord M.'s and his own dismissed bailiff,* and which was confirmed to me by Mrs. Fortescue, as I heretofore told you,† and to *you* by Mrs. Greme.‡

You can have nothing, therefore, I think, to be deeply concerned about but his future good, and the bad example he may hereafter set to his own family. These indeed are very just concerns: but were you to *leave* him now, either *with* or *without* his consent, his fortunes and alliances so considerable, his person and address so engaging (every one excusing you now on those accounts, and because of your relations' follies), it would have a very ill appearance for your reputation. I cannot, therefore, on the most deliberate consideration, advise you to think of that, while you have no reason to doubt his honour. May eternal vengeance pursue the villain, if he give room for an apprehension of this nature!

Yet his teasing ways are intolerable: his acquiescence with your slight delays, and his resignedness to the distance you now keep him at (for a fault so much slighter, as he must think, than the punishment), are unaccountable. He doubts your love of *him*, that is very probable; but you have reason to be surprised at *his* want of ardour; a blessing so great within his *reach*, as I may say.

By the time you have read to this place, you will have no doubt of what has been the issue of the conference between the *two gentlemen*. I am equally shocked, and enraged against them all. Against them *all*, I say; for I have tried your good Norton's weight with your mother (though at first I did not intend to tell you so), to the same purpose as the gentleman sounded your uncle. Never were there such determined brutes in the world! Why should I mince the matter? Yet would I fain, methinks, make an exception for your mother.

Your uncle will have it that you are ruined. 'He can

* See vol. i. Letter IV. † Ibid., Letter XII.
‡ See vol. ii. Letter XXI.

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'believe everything bad of a creature, he says, who could 'run away with a man; with such a one especially as 'Lovelace. They *expected* applications from you, when 'some heavy distress had fallen upon you. But they are 'all resolved not to stir an inch in your favour; no, not 'to save your life!'

My dearest soul, resolve to assert your right. Claim your own, and go and live upon it as you ought. Then, if you marry not, how will the wretches creep to you for your reversionary dispositions!

You were accused (as in your aunt's letter) 'of premedi-'tation and contrivance in your escape.' Instead of pitying *you*, the mediating person was called upon 'to pity *them*; 'who once, your uncle said, doated upon you: who took no 'joy but in your presence: who devoured your words as you 'spoke them: who trod over again your footsteps, as you 'walked before them.'—And I know not what of this sort.

Upon the whole, it is now evident to me, and so it must be to you, when you read this letter, that you must be his. And the sooner you are so the better. Shall we suppose that marriage is not in your power?—I cannot have patience to suppose that.

I am concerned, methinks, to know how you will do to condescend (now you see you must be his), after you have kept him at such a distance; and for the revenge his pride may put him upon taking for it. But let me tell you, that if my going up, and sharing fortunes with you, will prevent such a noble creature from stooping too low; much more, were it likely to prevent your ruin, I would not hesitate a moment about it. What is the whole world to me, weighed against such a friend as you are? Think you that any of the enjoyments of this life could be enjoyments to me, were you involved in calamities from which I could either alleviate or relieve you, by giving up those enjoyments? And what in saying this, and acting up to it, do I offer you, but the fruits of a friendship your worth has created?

Excuse my warmth of *expression*. The warmth of my *heart* wants none. I am enraged at your relations; for,

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bad as what I have mentioned is, I have not told you all; nor now, perhaps, ever will. I am angry at my own mother's narrowness of mind, and at her indiscriminate adherence to old notions. And I am exasperated against your foolish, your *low-vanitied* Lovelace. But let us stoop to take the wretch as he is, and make the best of him, since you are destined to stoop, to keep grovellers and worldlings in countenance. He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you. Nor *dare* he—not so much of a devil as that comes to neither. Had he such villainous intentions, so much in his power as you are, they would have shown themselves before now to such a penetrating and vigilant eye, and to such a pure heart as yours. Let us save the wretch then, if we can, though we soil our fingers in lifting him up his dirt.

There is yet, to a person of your fortune and independence, a good deal to do, if you enter upon those terms which ought to be entered upon. I don't find that he has once talked of settlements; nor yet of the license. A foolish wretch!—But as your evil destiny has thrown you out of all other protection and mediation, you must be father, mother, uncle, to yourself; and enter upon the requisite points for yourself. It is hard upon you; but indeed you must. Your situation requires it. *What room for delicacy now?*—Or would you have *me* write to him? yet that would be the same thing as if you were to write yourself. Yet write you should, I think, if you cannot speak. But speaking is certainly best: for words leave no traces; they pass as breath; and mingle with air; and may be explained with latitude. But the pen is a witness on record.

I know the gentleness of your spirit; I know the laudable pride of your heart; and the just notion you have of the dignity of our sex in these delicate points. But once more, all this is nothing now: your honour is concerned that the dignity I speak of should not be stood upon.

'Mr. Lovelace,' would I say; yet hate the foolish fellow for his low, his stupid pride, in wishing to triumph over the dignity of his own wife;—'I am by your means 'deprived of every friend I have in the world. In what

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'light am I to look upon *you?* I have well considered 'everything. You have made some people, much against 'my liking, think me a *wife:* others know I am not 'married; nor do I desire anybody should believe I *am.* 'Do you think your being here in the same house with 'me can be to my reputation? You talked to me of Mrs. 'Fretchville's house.' This will bring him to renew his last discourse on that subject, if he does not revive it of himself. 'If Mrs. Fretchville knows not her own mind, 'what is her house to me? You talked of bringing up 'your cousin Montague to bear me company: if my 'brother's schemes be your pretence for not going your-'self to *fetch her,* you can *write* to her. I insist upon 'bringing these two points to an issue: off or on ought to 'be indifferent to *me,* if so to *them.*'

Such a declaration must bring all forward. There are twenty ways, my dear, that you would find out for another in your circumstances. He will disdain, from his native insolence, to have it thought he has *anybody* to consult. Well then, will he not be obliged to declare himself? And if he *does,* no delays on your side, I beseech you. Give him the day. Let it be a short one. It would be derogating from your own merit, and *honour* too, let me tell you, even although he should not be so explicit as he ought to be, to seem but to doubt his meaning; and to wait for that explanation for which I should for ever despise him, if he makes it necessary. Twice already have you, my dear, if not oftener, *modestied away* such opportunities as you ought not to have slipped. As to settlements, if they come not in naturally, e'en leave them to his own justice, and to the justice of his family. And there's an end of the matter.

This is *my* advice: mend it as circumstances offer, and follow *your own.* But indeed, my dear, this, or something like it, would I do. And let him tell me afterwards, if he dared or would, that he humbled down to his shoe-buckles the person it would have been his glory to exalt.

Support yourself, meantime, with reflections worthy of

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yourself. Though tricked into this man's power, you are not meanly subjugated to it. All his reverence you command, or rather, as I may say, inspire; since it was never known that he had any reverence for aught that was good, till you was with him: and he professes now and then to be so awed and charmed by your example, as that the force of it shall reclaim him.

I believe you will have a difficult task to keep him to it: but the more will be your honour, if you effect his reformation: and it is my belief that if you *can* reclaim this great, this specious deceiver, who has, morally speaking, such a number of years before him, you will save from ruin a multitude of innocents; for those seem to me to have been the prey for which he has spread his wicked snares. And who knows but for this very purpose, principally, a person may have been permitted to swerve, whose heart or will never was in her error, and who has so much remorse upon her for having, as she thinks, erred at all? Adieu, my dearest friend.

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

Enclosed in the above.

I MUST trouble you with my concerns, though your own are so heavy upon you. A piece of news I have to tell you. Your uncle Antony is disposed to marry. With *whom*, think you? with my mother. True indeed. Your family know it. All is laid with redoubled malice at your door. And there the *old soul* himself lays it.

Take no notice of this intelligence, not so much as in your letters to me, for fear of accidents.

I think it can't do. But were I to provoke my mother, that might afford a pretence. Else, I should have been with you before now, I fancy.

The first likelihood that appears to me of encouragement, I dismiss Hickman, that's certain. If my mother disoblige *me* in so important an article, I shan't think of obliging *her* in such another. It is impossible, surely, that the

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desire of *popping me off* to that honest man can be with such a view.

I repeat, that it cannot come to anything. But these *widows!*—Then such a love in us all, both old and young, of being courted and admired!—and so irresistible to their *eldership* to be flattered, that all power is not over with them; but that they may still class and prank it with their daughters.—It vexed me heartily to have her tell me of this proposal with self-complaisant simperings; and yet she affected to speak of it as if she had no intention to encourage it.

These antiquated bachelors (old before they believe themselves to be so) imagine that when they have once persuaded *themselves* to think of the state, they have nothing more to do than to make their minds known to the woman.

Your uncle's overgrown fortune is indeed a bait; a tempting one. A saucy daughter to be got rid of! The memory of the father of that daughter not precious enough to weigh much!—But let him advance if he dare—let her encourage—but I hope she won't.

Excuse me, my dear. I am nettled. They have *fearfully rumpled my gorget.* You'll think me faulty. So I won't put my name to this separate paper. Other hands may resemble mine. You did not see me write it.

—o—

LETTER X.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Monday Afternoon, May 15.

Now indeed it is evident, my best, my only friend, that I have but one choice to make. And now I do find that I have carried my resentment against this man too far; since now I am to appear as if under an obligation to his patience with me for a conduct, which perhaps he will think (if not humorsome and childish) plainly demonstrative of my little esteem of him; of but a *secondary* esteem at least, where

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before, his pride, rather than his merit, had made him expect a *first*. Oh, my dear! to be cast upon a man that is not a *generous* man; that is indeed a *cruel* man! a man that is capable of creating a distress to a young creature, who, by her evil destiny is thrown into his power; and then of *enjoying* it, as I may say! [I verily think I may say so of this savage!]—What a fate is mine!

You give me, my dear, good advice as to the peremptory manner in which I ought to treat him: but do you consider to *whom* it is that you give it?—And then should I take it, and should he be capable of delay, I unprotected, desolate, nobody to fly to, in what a wretched light must I stand in his eyes; and, what is still as bad, in my own! Oh, my dear, see you not, *as I do*, that the *occasion* for this my indelicate, my shocking situation should never have been given by *me*, of all creatures; since I am unequal, utterly unequal, to the circumstances to which my inconsideration has reduced me;—What! *I* to challenge a man for a husband!—*I* to exert myself to quicken the delayer in his resolutions! and having as you think lost an opportunity, to begin to try to recall it, as *from myself*, and *for myself!* to *threaten* him, as I may say, into the marriage state!—Oh, my dear! if this be right to be done, how difficult is it, where modesty and self (or where pride, if you please) is concerned, to do that right? or, to express myself in your words, to be father, mother, uncle, to myself!—especially where one thinks a triumph over one is intended.

You say you have tried Mrs. Norton's weight with my mother—bad as the returns are which my application by Mr. Hickman has met with, you tell me 'that you have 'not acquainted me with all the bad, nor now, perhaps, 'ever will.' But why so, my dear? What *is* the bad, what *can* be the bad, which now you will never tell me of?—What worse, then renounce me! and for ever! 'My uncle, 'you say, believes me ruined: he declares that he can 'believe everything bad of a creature who could run away 'with a man: and they have all made a resolution not to

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'stir an inch in my favour; no, not to save my life!'—Have you worse than this, my dear, behind?—Surely my father has not renewed his dreadful malediction!—Surely, if so, my mother has not joined in it! Have my uncles given it their sanction, and made it a family act? *And themselves thereby more really faulty, than even* THEY *suppose me to be, though I the cause of that greater fault in them?*—What, my dear, is the worst, that you will leave for ever unrevealed?

O Lovelace! why comest thou not just now, while these black prospects are before me? For now, couldst thou look into my heart, wouldst thou see a distress worthy of thy barbarous triumph!

•

I WAS forced to quit my pen. And you say you have tried Mrs. Norton's weight with my mother?

What *is* done cannot be remedied: but I wish you had not taken a step of this importance to me without first consulting me. Forgive me, my dear, but I must tell you that that high-souled and noble friendship which you have ever avowed with so obliging and so uncommon a warmth, although it has been always the subject of my grateful admiration, has been often the ground of my apprehension, because of its unbridled fervour.

Well, but now to look forward, you are of opinion that I must be his: and that I cannot leave him with reputation to myself, whether with or without his consent. I must, if so, make the best of the bad matter.

He went out in the morning; intending not to return to dinner, unless (as he sent me word) I would admit him to dine with me.

I excused myself. The man, whose anger is now to be of such high importance to me, was, it seems, displeased.

As he (as well as I) expected that I should receive a letter from you this day by Collins, I suppose he will not be long before he returns; and then, possibly, he is to be mighty stately, mighty *mannish*, mighty *coy*, if you please! And then must I be very humble, very submissive, and try to insinuate myself into his good graces: with downcast eye,

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if not by speech, beg his forgiveness for the distance I have so perversely kept him at?—Yes, I warrant!—But I shall see how this behaviour will sit upon me!—You have always rallied me upon my meekness, I think: well then, I will try if I can be still meeker, shall I!—Oh, my dear!—

But let me sit with my hands before me, all patience, all resignation; for I think I hear him coming up. Or shall I roundly accost him, in the words, in the form, which you, my dear, prescribed?

He is come in. He has sent to me, all impatience, as Dorcas says, by his aspect.—But I cannot, cannot see him!

—o—

Monday Night.

THE contents of your letter, and my own heavy reflections, rendered me incapable of seeing this expecting man. The first word he asked Dorcas was, if I had received a letter since he had been out? She told me this; and her answer that I had; and was fasting, and had been in tears ever since.

He sent to desire an interview with me.

I answered by her, that I was not very well. In the morning, if better, I would see him as soon as he pleased.

Very humble! was it not, my dear? Yet he was *too royal* to take it for humility; for Dorcas told me he rubbed one side of his face impatiently; and said a rash word, and was out of humour; stalking about the room.

Half an hour after, he sent again; desiring very earnestly that I should admit him to supper with me. He would enter upon no subjects of conversation but what I should lead to.

So I should have been at *liberty*, you see, to *court him!*

I again desired to be excused.

Indeed, my dear, my eyes were swelled: I was very low spirited; and could not think of entering all at once, after the distance I had kept him at for several days, into the freedom of conversation which the utter rejection I have met with from my relations, as well as your advice, has made necessary.

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He sent up to tell me that, as he heard I was fasting, if I would promise to eat some chicken which Mrs. Sinclair had ordered for supper, he would acquiesce.—*Very kind in his anger! Is he not?*

I promised that I would. Can I be more *preparatively* condescending?—How happy, I'll warrant, if I may meet him in a *kind* and *forgiving* humour!

I hate myself! But I won't be insulted. Indeed I won't, for all this.

—o—

LETTER XI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday, May 16.

I THINK once more we seem to be in a kind of train; but through a storm. I will give you the particulars.

I heard him in the dining-room at five in the morning. I had rested very ill, and was up too. But opened not my door till six: when Dorcas brought me his request for my company.

He approached me, and taking my hand as I entered the dining-room, I went not to bed, Madam, till two, said he; yet slept not a wink. For God's sake, torment me not, as you have done for a week past.

He paused. I was silent.

At first, proceeded he, I thought your resentment of a curiosity, in which I had been disappointed, could not be deep; and that it would go off of itself. But when I found it was to be kept up till you knew the success of some new overtures which you had made, and which, complied with, might have deprived me of you for ever, how, Madam, could I support myself under the thoughts of having, with such a union of interests, made so little impression upon your mind in my favour?

He paused again. I was still silent. He went on.

I acknowledge that I have a *proud heart*, Madam. I cannot but hope for some instances of previous and pre-

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ferable favour from the lady I am ambitious to call mine; and that her choice of me should not appear, not *flagrantly* appear, directed by the perverseness of her selfish persecutors, who are my irreconcilable enemies.

More to the same purpose he said. You know, my dear, the room he had given me to recriminate upon him in twenty instances. I did not spare him.

Every one of these instances, said I (after I had enumerated them) convinces me of your *pride* indeed, sir, but not of your *merit*. I confess that I have as much *pride* as you can have, although I hope it is of another kind than that you so *readily avow*. But if, sir, you have the least mixture in yours of that pride which may be expected, and thought laudable, in a man of your birth, alliances, and fortune, you should rather wish, I will presume to say, to promote what you call my pride, than either to suppress it, or to regret that I have it. It is *this* my acknowledged pride, proceeded I, that induces me to tell you, sir, that I think it beneath me to disown what have been my motives for declining, for some days past, any conversation with you, or visit from Mr. Mennell, that might lead to points out of my power to determine upon until I heard from my uncle Harlowe; whom I confess I have caused to be sounded, whether I might be favoured with his interest to obtain for me a reconciliation with my friends, upon terms which I had caused to be proposed.

I know not, said he, and suppose must not presume to ask, what those terms were. But I can but too well guess at them; and that I was to have been the preliminary sacrifice. But you must allow me, Madam, to say, that as much as I admire the nobleness of your sentiments in general, and in particular that *laudable* pride which you have spoken of, I wish that I could compliment you with such a *uniformity* in it, as had set you as much above all submission to minds implacable and unreasonable (I hope I may, without offence, say that your brother's and sister's are such), as it has above all favour and condescension to me.

Duty and *nature*, sir, call upon me to make the sub-

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missions you speak of: there is a father, there is a mother, there are uncles in the one case, to justify and demand those submissions. What, pray, sir, can be pleaded for the *condescension,* as you call it? Will you say your merits, either with regard to *them,* or to *myself,* may?

This, Madam, to be said, after the persecutions of those relations! After what you have suffered! After what you have made me hope! Let me, my dearest creature, ask you (we have been talking of *pride*), What sort of pride must *his* be, which can dispense with inclination and preference in the lady whom he adores?—What must be that love——

Love, sir! who talks of *love?*—Was not *merit* the thing we were talking of?—Have *I* ever professed, have *I* ever required of *you* professions of a passion of that nature?—But there is no end of these debatings; each *so* faultless, each *so* full of self——

I do not think myself *faultless,* Madam:—but——

But what, sir!—Would you ever more argue with me, as if you were a child?—Seeking palliations, and making promises?—Promises of what, sir? Of being in future the man it is a shame a gentleman is not?—Of being the man——

Good God! interrupted he, with eyes lifted up, if *thou* wert to be thus severe——

Well, well, sir! [impatiently] I need only to observe, that all this vast difference in sentiment shows how unpaired our minds are—so let us——

Let us *what,* Madam!—My soul is rising into tumults! And he looked so wildly that I was a good deal terrified. —Let us *what,* Madam!——

I was, however, resolved not to desert myself.—Why, sir! let us resolve to quit every regard for each other.—Nay, flame not out—I am a poor weak-minded creature in some things: but where what I *should be,* or not deserve to live, if I *am not* is in the question, I have a great and invincible spirit, or my own conceit betrays me—let us resolve to quit every regard for each other that is more than civil. *This* you may depend upon: I will never marry any

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other man. I have seen enough of your sex; at least of *you*.—A single life shall ever be *my* choice: while I will leave you at liberty to pursue *your own*.

Indifference, *worse* than indifference! said he, in a passion——

Interrupting him—Indifference let it be—you have not (in my opinion at least) deserved that it should be other: if you have in *your own*, you have cause (at least your *pride* has) to hate me for misjudging you.

Dearest, dearest creature! snatching my hand with fierceness, let me beseech you to be *uniformly* noble! *Civil regards*, Madam!—*Civil regards!*—Can you so expect to narrow and confine such a passion as mine?

Such a passion as yours, Mr. Lovelace, *deserves* to be narrowed and confined. It is either the passion *you* do not think it, or *I* do not. I question whether your mind is capable of being *so* narrowed and *so* widened, as is necessary to make it be what I wish it to be. Lift up your hands and your eyes, sir, in silent wonder, if you please; but what does that wonder express, what does it convince me of, but that we are not born for one another.

By my soul, said he, and grasped my hand with an eagerness that hurt it, we *were* born for one another: you *must* be mine—you *shall* be mine [and put his other hand round me] although my damnation were to be the purchase!

I was still more terrified—let me leave you, Mr. Lovelace, said I; or do you be gone from me. Is the passion you boast of to be thus shockingly demonstrated?

You must not go, Madam!—You must not leave me in anger——

I will return—I will return—when you can be less violent—less shocking.

And he let me go.

The man quite frighted me; insomuch, that when I got into my chamber, I found a sudden flow of tears a great relief to me.

In half an hour, he sent a little billet, expressing his

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concern for the vehemence of his behaviour, and prayed to see me.

I went. Because I could not help myself, I went.

He was full of his excuses—Oh, my dear, what would you, even *you*, do with such a man as this: and in my situation?

It was very possible for him now, he said, to account for the workings of a beginning phrensy. For his part, he was near distraction. All last week to suffer as he had suffered; and now to talk of *civil regards* only, when he had hoped, from the nobleness of my mind——

Hope what you will, interrupted I, I must insist upon it, that our minds are by no means suited to each other. You have brought me into difficulties. I am deserted by every friend but Miss Howe. My true sentiments I will not conceal—it is against my will that I must submit to owe protection from a brother's projects, which Miss Howe thinks are not given over, to you who have brought me into these straights: *not* with my own concurrence brought me into them; remember that——

I do remember that, Madam!—So often reminded, how can I forget it?

Yet I *will* owe to you this protection, if it be necessary, in the earnest hope that you will *shun*, rather than *seek* mischief, if any further inquiry after me be made. But what hinders you from leaving me?—Cannot I send to you? The widow Fretchville, it is plain, knows not her own mind: the people here indeed are more civil to me every day than other: but I had rather have lodgings more agreeable to my circumstances. I best know what will suit them; and am resolved not to be obliged to anybody. If you leave me, I will privately retire to some one of the neighbouring villages, and there wait my cousin Morden's arrival with patience.

I presume, Madam, replied he, from what you have said, that your application to Harlowe Place has proved unsuccessful; I therefore hope that you will now give me leave to mention the terms in the nature of settlements, which I have long intended to propose to you; and which having till now delayed to do, through accidents not proceeding

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from myself, I had thoughts of urging to you *the moment you entered upon your new house;* and upon your finding yourself as independent in *appearance* as you are in *fact.* Permit me, Madam, to propose these matters to you—not with an expectation of your *immediate answer;* but for your *consideration.*

Were not hesitation, a self-felt glow, a downcast eye, encouragement more than enough? and yet you will observe (as I now do on recollection) that he was in no great hurry to solicit for a *day;* since he had no thoughts of proposing settlements till I had got into my new house; and now in his great complaisance to me, he desired leave to propose his terms, not with an expectation of my *immediate answer;* but for my *consideration* only.—Yet, my dear, your advice was too much in my head at this time. I hesitated.

He urged on upon my silence: he would call God to witness to the justice, nay to the *generosity,* of his intentions to me, if I would be so good as to hear what he had to propose to me as to settlements.

Could not the man have fallen into the subject without this *parade?* Many a point, you know, *is* refused, and *ought to be* refused, if leave be asked to introduce it; and when *once* refused, the refusal must in honour be adhered to—whereas, had it been *slid* in upon one, as I may say, it might have merited further consideration. If such a man as Mr. Lovelace knows not this, who should?

But he seemed to think it enough that he had asked my *leave* to propose his settlements. He took no advantage of my silence, as I presume men *as modest* as Mr. Lovelace would have done in a like case: yet, gazing in my face very confidently, and seeming to expect my answer, I thought myself obliged to give the subject a more diffuse turn, in order to save myself the mortification of appearing too ready in my compliance, after such a distance as had been between us; and yet (in pursuance of your advice) I was willing to avoid the necessity of giving him such a repulse as might again throw us out of the course—a cruel alternative to be reduced to!

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You talk of *generosity*, Mr. Lovelace, said I; and you talk of *justice*; perhaps without having considered the force of the words, in the sense you use them on this occasion.—Let me tell you what *generosity* is, in my sense of the word—TRUE GENEROSITY is not confined to pecuniary instances: it is *more* than politeness: it is *more* than good faith: it is *more* than honour; it is *more* than *justice*: since all these are but duties, and what a worthy mind cannot dispense with. But TRUE GENEROSITY is greatness of soul. It incites us to do more by a fellow-creature than can be strictly required of us. It obliges us to hasten to the relief of an object that wants relief; anticipating even such a one's hope or expectation. Generosity, sir, will not surely permit a worthy mind to doubt of its honourable and beneficent intentions: much less will it allow itself to shock, to offend any one; and least of all, a person thrown by adversity, mishap, or accident, into its protection.

What an opportunity had he to clear his intentions had he been so disposed, from the *latter part* of this home observation!—but he ran away with the *first*, and kept to that.

Admirably defined! he said—but who, at this rate, Madam, can be said to be *generous to you?*—Your *generosity* I implore; while *justice*, as it must be my sole merit, shall be my aim. Never was there a woman of such nice and delicate sentiments!

It is a reflection upon yourself, sir, and upon the company you have kept, if you think these notions either nice or delicate. Thousands of my sex are more nice than I; for they would have avoided the devious path I have been surprised into; the consequences of which surprise have laid me under the sad necessity of telling a man, *who has not delicacy enough to enter into those parts of the female character which are its glory and distinction*, what true generosity is.

His divine monitress, he called me. He would endeavour to form his manners (as he had often promised) by my example. But he hoped I would now permit him to mention briefly the *justice* he proposed to do me, in the terms

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of the settlements; a subject so proper, *before now*, to have been entered upon; and which would have been entered upon long ago, had not my *frequent displeasure* [*I am ever in fault, my dear!*] taken from him the *opportunity* he had often wished for: but now, having ventured to lay hold of *this*, nothing should divert him from improving it.

I have no spirits just now, sir, to attend to such weighty points. What you have a mind to propose, write to me: and I shall know what answer to return. Only one thing let me remind you of, that if you touch upon any subject, in which my father has a concern, I shall judge by your treatment of the father what value you have for the daughter.

He *looked* as if he would choose rather to speak than write: but had he *said* so, I had a severe return to have made upon him; as possibly he might see by *my* looks.

In this way are we now: a sort of calm, as I said, succeeding a storm. What may happen next, whether a storm or a calm, with such a spirit as I have to deal with, who can tell?

But be that as it will, I think, my dear, I am not *meanly* off: and that is a great point with me; and which I know you will be glad to hear: if it were only, that I can see this man without losing any of that dignity [What other word can I use, speaking of *myself*, that betokens *decency*, and not *arrogance?*] which is so necessary to enable me to look *up*, or rather with the *mind's* eye, I may say, to look *down* upon a man of this man's cast.

Although circumstances have so offered that I could not take your advice as to the *manner* of dealing with him; yet you gave me so much courage by it, as has enabled me to conduct things to this issue; as well as determined me against leaving him: which, *before*, I was thinking to do, at all adventures. Whether, when it came to the point, I *should* have done so, or not, I cannot say, because it would have depended upon his behaviour at the time.

But let his behaviour be what it will, I am afraid (with

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you), that should anything offer at last to oblige me to leave him, I shall not mend my situation in the world's eye; but the contrary. And yet I will not be treated by him with indignity while I have any power to help myself.

You, my dear, have accused me of having *modestied away*, as you phrase it, several opportunities of being—being what, my dear?—Why, the wife of a libertine! and what a libertine and his wife are my cousin Morden's letter tells us.—Let me here, once for all, endeavour to account for the motives of behaviour to this man, and for the principles I have proceeded upon, as they appear to me upon a close self-examination.

Be pleased then to allow me to think that my motives on this occasion arise not *altogether* from maidenly niceness; nor yet from the apprehension of what my present tormenter, and future husband, may think of a precipitate compliance, on such a disagreeable behaviour as his: but they arise principally from what offers to my own heart; respecting, as I may say, its own rectitude, its own judgment of the *fit* and the *unfit;* as I would, without study, answer *for* myself *to* myself, in the *first* place; to *him,* and to the *world,* in the *second* only. Principles that *are* in my mind; that I *found* there; implanted, no doubt, by the first gracious Planter: which therefore *impel* me, as I may say, to act up to them, that thereby I may, to the best of my judgment, be enabled to comport myself worthily in both states (the single and the married), let others act as they will by *me.*

I hope, my dear, I do not deceive myself, and instead of setting about rectifying what is amiss in my heart, endeavour to find excuses for habits and peculiarities which I am unwilling to cast off or overcome. The heart is very deceitful: do you, my dear friend, lay mine open [*but surely it is always open before you!*], and spare me not, if you think it culpable.

This observation once for all, as I said, I thought proper to make, to convince you that, to the best of my judgment, my errors, in matters as well of lesser moment as of

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greater, shall rather be the fault of my judgment than of my will.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday Night, May 16.

MR. LOVELACE has sent me, by Dorcas, his proposals, as follow:

'To spare a delicacy so extreme, and to obey you, I write: 'and the rather that you may communicate this paper to 'Miss Howe, who may consult any of her friends you shall 'think proper to have intrusted on this occasion. I say, '*intrusted*; because, as you know, I have given it out to 'several persons that we are actually married.

'In the first place, Madam, I offer to settle upon you, by 'way of jointure, your whole estate: and moreover to vest 'in trustees such a part of mine in Lancashire, as shall pro- 'duce a clear four hundred pounds a year, to be paid to your 'sole and separate use quarterly.

'My own estate is a clear not nominal 2000*l. per annum*. 'Lord M. proposes to give me possession either of that 'which he has in Lancashire [to which, by the way, I 'think I have a better title than he has himself], or that 'we call *The Lawn*, in Hertfordshire, upon my nuptials with 'a lady whom he so greatly admires; and to make that I 'shall choose a clear 1000*l. per annum*.

'My too great contempt of censure has subjected me to 'much slander. It may not therefore be improper to assure 'you, on the word of a gentleman, that no part of my estate 'was ever mortgaged: and that although I lived very ex- 'pensively abroad, and made large draughts, yet that Mid- 'summer-day next will discharge all that I owe in the world.

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'My notions are not all bad ones. I have been thought, in 'pecuniary cases, *generous*. It would have deserved *another* 'name, had I not first been *just*.

'If, as your own estate is at present in your father's hands, 'you rather choose that I should make a jointure out of 'mine, tantamount to yours, be it what it will, it shall be 'done. I will engage Lord M. to write to *you*, what he 'proposes to do on the happy occasion: not as your desire 'or expectation, but to demonstrate that no advantage is 'intended to be taken of the situation you are in with your 'own family.

'To show the beloved daughter the consideration I have 'for her, I will consent that she shall prescribe the terms of 'agreement in relation to the large sums, which must be in 'her father's hands, arising from her grandfather's estate. I 'have no doubt but he will be put upon making large de-'mands upon you. All those it shall be in your power to 'comply with, for the sake of your own peace. And the 'remainder shall be paid into your hands, and be entirely at 'your disposal, as a fund to support those charitable dona-'tions, which I have heard you so famed for *out* of your 'family, and for which you have been so greatly reflected 'upon *in* it.

'As to clothes, jewels, and the like, against the time you 'shall choose to make your appearance, it will be my pride 'that you shall not be beholden for such of these, as shall 'be answerable to the rank of both, to those who have had 'the stupid folly to renounce a daughter they deserved not. 'You must excuse me, Madam: you would mistrust my 'sincerity in the rest, could I speak of these people without 'asperity, though so nearly related to you.

'These, Madam, are my proposals. They are such as I 'always designed to make, whenever you would permit me 'to enter into the delightful subject. But you have been so 'determined to try every method for reconciling yourself to 'your relations, even by giving me absolutely up for ever, 'that you have seemed to think it but justice to keep me at 'a distance, till the event of that your *predominant* hope

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'could be seen. It is *now* seen!—and although I *have been*, 'and perhaps still *am*, ready to regret the want of that pre- 'ference I wished for from you as Miss Clarissa Harlowe, 'yet I am sure, as the husband of Mrs. Lovelace, I shall be 'more ready to adore than to blame you for the pangs you 'have given to a heart, the generosity, or rather *justice* of 'which, my implacable enemies have taught you to doubt: 'and this still the readier, as I am persuaded that those pangs 'never would have been given by a mind so noble, had not 'the doubt been entertained (perhaps with too great an 'appearance of reason); and as I hope I shall have it to 'reflect, that the moment the doubt shall be overcome, the 'indifference will cease.

'I will only add, that if I have omitted anything that 'would have given you farther satisfaction; or if the above 'terms be short of what you would wish; you will be pleased 'to supply them as you think fit. And when I know your 'pleasure, I will instantly order articles to be drawn up con- 'formably, that nothing in my power may be wanting to 'make you happy.

'You will now, dearest Madam, judge how far all the 'rest depends upon yourself.'

You see, my dear, what he offers. You see it is all my fault, that he has not made these offers before. I am a strange creature!—to be to blame in *everything*, and to *everybody*; yet neither intend the ill at the time, nor know it to *be* the ill too late, or so nearly too late, that I must give up all the delicacy he talks of, to compound for my fault!

I shall now judge how far the rest depends upon myself! So coldly concludes he such warm, and, in the main, unobjectionable proposals. Would you not, as you read, have supposed that the paper would conclude with the most earnest demand of a day?—I own I had that expectation so strong, resulting *naturally*, as I may say, from the premises, that without *studying* for dissatisfaction, I could not help being dissatisfied when I came to the conclusion.

But you say there is no help. I must perhaps make *further* sacrifices. All delicacy it seems is to be at an end with

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me!—but, if so, this man knows not what every *wise* man knows, that prudence, and virtue, and delicacy of mind in a *wife*, do the husband more *real* honour in the eye of the world, than the same qualities (were *she* destitute of them) in *himself*, do him: as the *want* of them in her does him more *dishonour:* for are not the wife's errors the husband's reproach? how *justly* his reproach, is another thing.

I will consider this paper; and write to it, if I am able: for it seems now, *all the rest depends upon myself.*

—o—

LETTER XIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday Morning, May 17.

MR. LOVELACE would fain have engaged me last night. But as I was not prepared to enter upon the subject of his proposals (intending to consider them maturely), and was not highly pleased with his conclusion, I desired to be excused seeing him till morning; and the rather, as there is hardly any getting from him in tolerable time over-night.

Accordingly, about seven o'clock we met in the dining-room.

I find he was full of expectation that I should meet him with a very favourable, who knows but with a *thankful,* aspect? and I immediately found by his sullen countenance, that he was under no small disappointment that I did not.

My dearest love, are you well? Why look you so solemn upon me? Will your indifference never be over? If I have proposed terms in any respect *short* of your expectation——

I told him that he had very considerately mentioned my showing his proposals to Miss Howe; and as I should have a speedy opportunity to send them to her by Collins, I desired to suspend any talk upon that subject till I had her opinion upon them.

Good God!—If there were but the least loophole! the

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least room for delay!—But he was writing a letter to Lord M. to give him an account of his situation with me, and could not finish it so satisfactorily, either to my Lord or to himself, as if I would condescend to say, whether the terms he had proposed were acceptable or not.

Thus far, I told him, I could say, that my principal point was peace and reconciliation with my relations. As to other matters, the gentleness of his own spirit would put him upon doing more for me than I should ask, or expect. Wherefore, if all he had to write about was to know what Lord M. would do on my account, he might spare himself the trouble, for that my utmost wishes, as to myself, were much more easily gratified than he perhaps imagined.

He asked me then, if I would so far permit him to touch upon the happy day, as to request the presence of Lord M. on the occasion, and to be my father?

Father had a sweet and venerable sound with it, I said. I should be glad to have a father who would own me!

Was not this plain speaking, think you, my dear? Yet it rather, I must own, appears so to me on reflection, than was *designed* freely at the time. For I then, with a sigh from the bottom of my heart, thought of my *own father;* bitterly regretting that I am an outcast from him and from my mother.

Mr. Lovelace I thought seemed a little affected at the *manner* of my speaking, and perhaps at the sad reflection.

I am but a very young creature, Mr. Lovelace, said I [and wiped my eyes as I turned away my face], although you have *kindly,* and *in love to me,* introduced so much sorrow to me already: so you must not wonder that the word *father* strikes so sensibly upon the heart of a child ever dutiful till she knew you, and whose tender years still require the paternal wing.

He turned towards the window—[rejoice with me, my dear, since I seem to be devoted to him, that the man is not absolutely impenetrable!] His emotion was visible; yet he endeavoured to suppress it. Approaching me again; again he was obliged to turn from me; angelic something,

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he said: but then, obtaining a heart more *suitable* to his wish, he once more approached me.—For his own part, he said, as Lord M. was so subject to the gout, he was afraid that the compliment he had just proposed to make him, might, if made, occasion a *longer suspension* than he could bear to think of: and if it did, it would vex him to the heart that he had made it.

I could not say a single word to this, you know, my dear. But you will guess at my thoughts of what he said—so much passionate love, *lip-deep!* so prudent, and so dutifully patient *at heart* to a relation he had till now so undutifully despised.—Why, why, am I thrown upon such a man, thought I!

He hesitated, as if contending with himself; and after taking a turn or two about the room, he was at a great loss what to determine upon, he said, because he had not the honour of knowing when he was to be made the happiest of men.—Would to God it might that very instant be resolved upon!

He stopped a moment or two, staring, in his usual confident way, in my downcast face. [Did I not, oh, my beloved friend, think you, want a father or a mother just then?] But if he could not, so *soon* as he wished, procure my consent to a day; in *that* case, he thought the compliment might *as well be* made to Lord M. as *not* [See, *my dear!*], since the settlements might be drawn and engrossed in the intervenient time, which would pacify his impatience, *as no time would be lost.*

You will suppose how *I* was affected by this speech, by repeating the substance of what *he* said upon it; as follows.

But, by his soul, he knew not, so much was I upon the reserve, and so much latent meaning did my eye import, whether, when he most hoped to please me, he was not farthest from doing so. Would I vouchsafe to say, whether I approved of his compliment to Lord M. or not?

To leave it to *me,* to choose whether the speedy day he ought to have urged for with earnestness, should be acce-

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lerated or suspended!—Miss Howe, thought I, at that moment, says, I must not run away from this man!

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, if this matter be *ever to be*, it must be agreeable to me to have the full approbation of *one* side, since I cannot have that of the *other*.

If this matter be ever to be! Good God! what words are these at this time of day! and full *approbation* of *one* side! Why that word *approbation?* when the greatest pride of all my family is that of having the honour of so dear a creature for their relation? Would to heaven, my dearest life, added he, that, without complimenting *any*body, to-morrow might be the happiest day of my life!—What say you, my angel? with a trembling impatience, that *seemed* not affected.—What say you for *to-morrow?*

It was likely, my dear, I could say much to it, or name another day, had I been disposed to the latter, with such a *hinted delay from him.*

I was silent.

Next day, Madam, if not to-morrow?

Had he given me *time* to answer, it could not have been in the affirmative, you must think—but, *in the same breath*, he went on—Or the *day after that?*—and taking both my hands in his, he stared me into a half-confusion.—Would *you* have had patience with him, my dear?

No, no, said I, as calmly as possible, you cannot think that I should imagine there can be reason for such a hurry. It will be most agreeable, to be sure, for my Lord to be present.

I am all obedience and resignation, returned the wretch, with a self-pluming air, as if he had acquiesced to a proposal *made by me*, and had complimented me with a great piece of *self-denial.*

Is it not plain, my dear, that he designs to vex and tease me? Proud, yet mean and foolish man, if so!—But you say all punctilio is at an end with me. Why, why, will he take pains to make a heart wrap itself up in reserve, that wishes only, and that for his sake as well as my own, to observe due decorum?

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Modesty, I think, required of me that it should pass as he had put it. Did it not?—I think it did. Would to heaven—but what signifies wishing?

But when he would have *rewarded himself*, as he had heretofore called it, for this self-supposed concession, with a kiss, I repulsed him with a just and very sincere disdain.

He seemed both vexed and surprised, as one who had made the most agreeable proposals and concessions, and thought them ungratefully returned. He plainly said, that he thought our situation would entitle him to such an innocent freedom: and he was both amazed and grieved to be thus scornfully repulsed.

No reply could be made by me on such a subject.

I abruptly broke from him. I recollect, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, that I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead: the words, *Indifference, by his soul, next to hatred,* I heard him speak; and something of *ice* he mentioned: I heard not what.

Whether he intends to write to my Lord, or Miss Montague, I cannot tell. But *as all delicacy ought to be over with me now,* perhaps I am to blame to expect it from a man who may not know *what it is.* If he does *not,* and yet thinks himself very polite, and intends not to be otherwise, I am rather to be pitied, than he to be censured.

And after all, since I *must* take him as I find him, I *must:* that is to say, as a man so vain and so accustomed to be admired, that, not being conscious of internal defect, he has taken no pains to polish more than his outside: and as his proposals are higher than my expectations; and as, in his own opinion, he has a great deal to bear from *me,* I *will* (no new offence preventing) sit down to answer them; and, if possible, in terms as unobjectionable to him, as his are to me.

But after all, see you not, my dear, more and more, the mismatch that there is in our minds?

However, I am willing to compound for my fault, by giving up (if that may be all my punishment) the expectation of what is deemed happiness in this life, with such a husband

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as I fear he will make. In short, I will content myself to be a *suffering person* through the state to the end of my life —A long one it cannot be!

This may qualify him (as it may prove) from stings of conscience from misbehaviour to a *first* wife, to be a more tolerable one to a *second*, though not perhaps a better deserving one: while my story, to all who shall know it, will afford these instructions: *That the eye is a traitor, and ought ever to be mistrusted: that form is deceitful:* in other words; *that a fine person is seldom paired by a fine mind:* and *that sound principle and a good heart, are the only bases on which the hopes of a* happy future, *either with respect to this world or the other, can be built.*

And so much at present for Mr. Lovelace's proposals: of which I desire your opinion.*

[Four letters are written by Mr. Lovelace from the date of

* We cannot forbear observing in this place, that the lady has been particularly censured, even by some of her own sex, as *over-nice* in her part of the above conversations: but surely this must be owing to want of attention to the *circumstances* she was in, and to her *character*, as well as to the *character of the man she had to deal with:* for although she could not be supposed to know so much of his designs as the reader does by means of his letters to Belford, yet she was but too well convinced of his faulty morals, and of the necessity there was, from the whole of his behaviour to her, to keep such an encroacher, as she frequently calls him, at a distance. In Letter XLVIII. of vol. ii. the reader will see, that upon some favourable appearances she blames herself for her readiness to suspect him. *But his character, his principles*, said she, *are so faulty!—He is so light, so vain, so various.——Then, my dear, I have no guardian now; no father, no mother! nothing but God and my own vigilance to depend upon.* In Letter XXIV. of vol. ii. *Must I not with such a man*, says she, *be wanting to myself, were I not jealous and vigilant?*

By this time the reader will see that she had still *greater* reason for her jealousy and vigilance. And Lovelace will tell the sex, as he does in Letter XLVI. of this volume, *that the woman who resents not initiatory freedoms, must be lost. Love is an encroacher*, says he: *love never goes backward. Nothing but the highest act of love can satisfy an* indulged love.

But the reader perhaps is too apt to form a judgment of Clarissa's conduct in critical cases by *Lovelace's complaints of her coldness;* not considering his views upon her; and that she is proposed as an *example;* and therefore in her trials and distresses must not be allowed to dispense with those rules which perhaps some others of her sex, in her delicate situation, would not have thought themselves so strictly bound to observe; although, if she had *not* observed them, a *Lovelace* would have carried all his points.

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his last, giving the state of affairs between him and the lady, pretty much the same as in hers in the same period, allowing for the humour in his, and for his resentments, expressed with vehemence on her resolution to leave him, if her friends could be brought to be reconciled to her.—A few extracts from them will be only given.]

What, says he, might have become of me, and of my projects, had not her father, and the rest of the implacables, stood my friends?

[After violent threatenings of revenge, he says,]

'Tis plain she would have given me up for ever: nor should I have been able to prevent her abandoning of me, unless I had *torn up the tree by the roots to come at the fruit;* which I hope *still to bring down by a gentle shake or two,* if I can but have patience to stay the ripening seasoning.

[Thus triumphing in his unpolite cruelty, he says,]

After her haughty treatment of me, I am resolved she *shall* speak out. There are a thousand beauties to be discovered in the face, in the accent, in the *bush-beating* hesitations of a woman who is earnest about a subject which she wants to introduce, yet knows not how. Silly fellows, calling themselves generous ones, would value themselves for sparing a lady's confusion: but they are silly fellows indeed; and rob themselves of prodigious pleasure by their forwardness; and at the same time deprive her of displaying a world of charms, which only can be manifested on these occasions.

I'll tell thee beforehand, how it will be with my charmer in this case—she will be about it, and about it, several times: but I will not understand her: at least, after half a dozen hem—ings, she will be obliged to speak out—*I think, Mr. Lovelace—I think, sir—I think you were saying some days ago*—Still I will be all silence—her eyes fixed upon my shoe-buckles, as I sit over-against her—ladies when put to it thus always admire a man's shoe-buckles, or perhaps some particular beauties in the carpet. *I think you said that Mrs.*

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Fretchville—then a crystal tear trickles down each crimson cheek, vexed to have her virgin pride so little assisted. But, come, my meaning dear, cry I to myself, remember what I have suffered *for* thee, and what I have suffered *by* thee! Thy tearful pausings shall not be helped out by me. Speak out, love!—Oh, the sweet confusion! Can I rob myself of so many conflicting beauties by the precipitate charmer-pitying folly, by which a *politer* man [thou *knowest*, lovely, that I am no *polite* man!] betrayed by his own tenderness, and *unused* to female tears, would have been overcome? I will feign an irresolution of mind on the occasion, that she may not *quite* abhor me—that her reflections on the scene in my absence may bring to her remembrance some beauties in my part of it: and irresolution that will be owing to awe, to reverence, to profound veneration; and that will have more eloquence in it than words *can* have. Speak out then, love, and spare not.

Hard-heartedness, as it is called, is an *essential* of the *libertine's character*. Familiarised to the distresses he occasions, he is seldom betrayed by tenderness into a complaisant weakness unworthy of himself.

[Mentioning the settlements, he says],

I am in earnest as to the terms. If I marry her [and I have no doubt that I shall, after my pride, my ambition, my *revenge*, if thou wilt, is gratified], I will do her noble justice. The more I do for such a prudent, such an excellent economist, the more shall I do for myself.—But, by my soul, Belford, her haughtiness shall be brought down to own both love and obligation to me. Nor will this sketch of settlements bring us forwarder than I would have it. Modesty of sex will stand my friend at any time. At the very altar, our hands joined, I will engage to make this proud beauty leave the parson and me, and all my friends who should be present, though twenty in number, to look like fools upon one another, while she took wing, and flew out of the church door, or window (if that were open, and the door shut); and this only by a single word.

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[He mentions his rash expression, That she should be his, although his damnation was to be the purchase.]

At that instant, says he, I was upon the point of making a violent attempt, but was checked in the very moment, and but just in time to save myself, by the awe I was struck with on again casting my eye upon her terrified but lovely face, and seeing, as I thought, her spotless heart in every line of it.

O virtue, virtue! proceeds he, what is there in thee, that can thus against his will affect the heart of a Lovelace!—Whence these involuntary tremors, and fear of giving mortal offence?—What art thou, that acting in the breast of a feeble woman, canst strike so much awe into a spirit so intrepid! which never before, no, not in my first attempt, young as I then was, and frightened at my own boldness (till I found myself *forgiven*) had such an effect upon me!

[He paints, in lively colours, that part of the scene between him and the lady, where she says, The word father has a sweet and venerable sound with it.]

I was exceedingly affected, says he, upon the occasion, but was ashamed to be surprised into such a fit of unmanly weakness—so *ashamed*, that I was resolved to subdue it at the instant, and to guard against the like for the future. Yet, at that moment, I more than half regretted that I could not permit her to enjoy a triumph which she so well deserved to glory in—her youth, her beauty, her artless innocence, and her manner, equally beyond comparison or description. But her *indifference*, Belford!—That she could resolve to sacrifice me to the malice of my enemies; and carry on the design in so clandestine a manner—yet love her, as I do, to phrensy!—revere her, as I do, to adoration!—These were the recollections with which I fortified my recreant heart against her!—Yet, after all, if she persevere, she must conquer!—Coward, as she has made me, that never was a coward before!

[He concludes his fourth letter in a vehement rage, upon her repulsing him, when he offered to salute her; having

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supposed, as he owns, that she would have been all condescension on his proposals to her.]

This, says he, I will for ever remember against her, in order to steel my heart, that I may *cut through a rock of ice* to hers; and repay her for the disdain, the scorn, which glowed in her countenance, and was apparent in her air, at her abrupt departure from me, after such obliging behaviour on my side, and after I had so earnestly pressed her for an early day. The women below say she hates me; she despises me!—And 'tis true: she does; she must.—And why cannot I take their advice? I will not long, my fair one, be despised by *thee*, and laughed at by *them!*

Let me acquaint thee, Jack, adds he, by way of postscript, that this effort of hers to leave me, if she could have been received; her sending for a coach on Sunday; no doubt, resolving not to return, if she had gone out without me (for did she not declare that she had thoughts to retire to some of the villages about town, where she could be safe and private?) have, all together, so much alarmed me, that I have been adding to the written instructions for my fellow and the people below how to act in case she should elope in my absence: particularly letting Will know what he shall report to strangers in case she shall throw herself upon any such with a resolution to abandon me. To these instructions I shall further add as circumstances offer.

—o—

LETTER XIV.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Thursday, May 18.

I HAVE neither time nor patience, my dear friend, to answer every material article in your last letters just now received. Mr. Lovelace's proposals are all I like of him. And yet (as you do), I think that he concludes them not with that warmth and earnestness which we might naturally

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have expected from him. Never in my life did I hear or read of so patient a man, with such a blessing in his reach. But wretches of his cast, between you and me, my dear, have not, I fancy, the ardours that honest men have. Who knows, as your Bell once spitefully said, but he may have half a dozen creatures to quit his hands of before he engages for life?—Yet I believe you must not expect him to be honest on this side of his grand climacteric.

He, to suggest delay from a compliment to be made to Lord M. and to give time for settlements! *He*, a part of whose character it is, not to know what complaisance to his relations is—I have no patience with him! You did indeed want an interposing friend on the affecting occasion which you mention in yours of yesterday morning. But, upon my word, were I to have been that moment in your situation, and been so treated, I would have torn his eyes out, and left it to his own heart, when I had done, to furnish the reason for it.

Would to Heaven to-morrow, without complimenting anybody, might be his happy day!—Villain! After he had himself suggested the compliment!—And I think he accuses you of delaying!—Fellow, that he is!—How my heart is wrung!

But as matters now stand betwixt you, I am very unseasonable in expressing my resentments against him.—Yet I don't know whether I am or not, neither; since it is the most cruel of fates, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises. You must, at *least*, despise him; at times, however. His clenched fist offered to his forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure—I wish it had been a pole-axe, and in the hand of his worst enemy.

I will endeavour to think of some method, of some scheme to get you from him, and to fix you safely somewhere till your cousin Morden arrives—A scheme to lie by you, and to be pursued as occasion may be given. You are sure that you can go abroad when you please? and that our correspondence is safe? I cannot, however (for the reasons heretofore mentioned respecting your own reputation) wish

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you to leave him while he gives you not cause to suspect his honour. But your heart I know would be the easier, if you were sure of some asylum in case of necessity.

Yet once more, I say, I can have no notion that he can or dare to mean your dishonour. But then the man is a fool, my dear—that's all.

However, since you are thrown upon a fool, marry the fool at the first opportunity; and though I doubt that this man will be the most ungovernable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward: in short, as one given to convince you that there is nothing but imperfection in this life.

And what is the result of all I have written, but this—Either marry, my dear, or get from them all, and from him too.

You intend the latter, you'll say, as soon as you have opportunity. That, as above hinted, I hope quickly to furnish you with: and then comes out a trial between *you* and *yourself*.

These are the very fellows that we women do not *naturally* hate. We don't always know what is, and what is not, in our power to do. When some principal point we have long had in view becomes so critical, that we must of necessity choose or refuse, then perhaps we look about us; are affrighted at the wild and uncertain prospect before us; and, after a few struggles and heartaches, reject the untried new; draw in your horns, and resolve to *snail* on, as we did before, in a track we are acquainted with.

I shall be impatient till I have your next. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

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LETTER XV.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Wednesday, May 17.

I CANNOT conceal from you anything that relates to yourself so much as the enclosed does. You will see what the noble writer apprehends from you, and wishes of you, with regard to Miss Harlowe, and how much at heart all your relations have it that you do honourably by her. They compliment me with an influence over you, which I wish with all my soul you would let me have in this article.

Let me once more entreat thee, Lovelace, to reflect, before it be too late (before the mortal offence be given) upon the graces and merits of this lady. Let thy frequent remorses at last end in one effectual remorse. Let not pride and wantonness of heart ruin the fairer prospects. By my faith, Lovelace, there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense in our wild schemes. As we grow older, we shall be wiser, and looking back upon our foolish notions of the present hour (our youth dissipated), shall certainly despise ourselves when we think of the honourable engagements we might have made: thou, more especially, if thou lettest such a matchless creature slide through thy fingers. A creature pure from her cradle. In all her actions and sentiments uniformly noble. Strict in the performance of all her even *unrewarded* duties to the most *unreasonable of fathers;* what a *wife* will she make the man who shall have the honour to call her his!

What apprehensions wouldst thou have had reason for, had she been prevailed upon by giddy or frail motives, for which one man, by importunity, might prevail, as well as another?

We all know what an inventive genius thou art master of: we are all sensible that thou hast *a head to contrive, and a heart to execute.* Have I not called thine *the plottingest heart in the universe?* I called it so upon knowledge. What wouldst thou *more?* Why should it be the most *villanous,*

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as well as the most *able?*—Marry the lady; and *when* married, let her know what a number of contrivances thou hadst in readiness to play off. Beg of her not to hate thee for the communication; and assure her that thou gavest them up from remorse, and in justice to her extraordinary merit: and let her have the opportunity of congratulating herself for subduing a heart so capable of what thou callest *glorious mischief.* This will give *her* room for triumph; and even *thee* no less: she, for *hers* over *thee;* thou, for *thine* over *thyself.*

Reflect likewise upon her sufferings for thee. Actually at the time thou art forming schemes to ruin her (at least in *her* sense of the word), is she not labouring under a father's curse laid upon her by thy means, and for thy sake? and wouldst thou give operation and completion to that curse, which otherwise cannot have effect?

And what, Lovelace, all the time is thy pride?—Thou that vainly imaginest that the whole family of the Harlowes, and that of the Howes too, are but thy machines, unknown to themselves, to bring about thy purposes, and thy revenge, what art thou more or better than the instrument even of her implacable brother, and envious sister, to perpetuate the disgrace of the most excellent of sisters, to which they are moved by vilely low and sordid motives.—Canst thou bear, Lovelace, to be thought the machine of thy inveterate enemy James Harlowe?—Nay, art thou not the cully of that still viler Joseph Leman, who serves himself as much by thy money, as he does thee by the double part he acts by thy direction?—And further still, art thou not the devil's agent, who only can, and who certainly will, suitably reward thee, if thou proceedest, and if thou effectest thy wicked purpose?

Could any man but thee put together upon paper the following questions with so much unconcern as thou seemest to have written them?—give them a reperusal, O heart of adamant! 'Whither can she fly to avoid me! Her parents 'will not receive her. Her uncles will not entertain her. 'Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. 'Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but

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'ME—is entirely a stranger to the town.'*—What must that heart be that can triumph in a distress so deep, into which she has been plunged by thy elaborate arts and contrivances? And what a sweet, yet sad reflection was that, which had like to have had its due effect upon thee, arising from thy naming Lord M. for her nuptial father? her tender years inclining her to *wish* a father, and to *hope* a friend.—Oh, my dear Lovelace, canst thou resolve to be, instead of the father thou hast robbed her of, a devil?

Thou knowest that I have no interest, that I can have no view in wishing thee to do justice to this admirable creature. For thy own sake, once more I conjure thee, for thy family's sake, and for the sake of our *common humanity*, let me beseech thee to be just to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

No matter whether these expostulations are in character from me, or not. I *have* been and *am* bad enough. If thou takest my advice, which is (as the enclosed will show thee) the advice of all thy family, thou wilt perhaps have it to reproach me (and but perhaps neither) that thou art not a worse man than myself. But if thou dost *not*, and if thou ruinest such a virtue, all the complicated wickedness of ten devils, let loose among the innocent with full power over them, will not do so much vile and base mischief as thou wilt be guilty of.

It is said that the prince on his throne is not safe, if a mind so desperate can be found, as values not its *own* life. So may it be said that the most immaculate virtue is not safe, if a man can be met with who has no regard to his own honour, and makes a jest of the most solemn vows and protestations.

Thou mayest by trick, chicane, and false colours, thou who art worse than a pickeroon in love, overcome a poor lady so entangled as thou hast entangled her; so unprotected as thou hast made her: but consider how much more generous and just to her, and noble to thyself it is, to overcome *thyself*.

Once more, it is no matter whether my past or future

* See Letter I. of this volume.

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actions countenance my preachment, as perhaps thou'lt call what I have written: but this I promise thee, that whenever I meet with a woman of but one half of Miss Harlowe's perfections, who will favour me with her acceptance, I will take the advice I give, and marry. Nor will I offer to try her honour at the hazard of my own.

In other words, I will not degrade an excellent creature in *her own eyes,* by trials, when I have no cause for suspicion. And let me add, with respect to thy *eagleship's* manifestation, of which thou boastest, in thy attempts upon the innocent and uncorrupted, rather than upon those whom thou humorously comparest to wrens, wagtails, and phyltits, as thou callest them,* that I hope I have it not once to reproach myself, that I ruined the morals of any one creature, who otherwise would have been uncorrupted. Guilt enough in contributing to the *continued* guilt of other poor wretches, if I am one of those who take care she shall never *rise again,* when she has *once fallen.*

Whatever the capital devil, under whose banner thou hast listed, will let thee do, with regard to this incomparable woman, I hope thou wilt act with honour in relation to the enclosed, between Lord M. and me; since his Lordship, as thou wilt see, desires that thou mayest not know he wrote on the subject; for reasons, I think, very far from being creditable to thyself: and that thou wilt take as meant, the honest zeal for thy service, of

Thy real friend,

J. BELFORD.

—o—

LETTER XVI.

Lord M. to John Belford, Esq.

[Enclosed in the preceding.]

M. Hall, Monday, May 15.

SIR,—If any man in the world has power over my nephew, it is you. I therefore write this, to beg you to

* See Letter XCIV. of vol. ii.

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interfere in the affair depending between him and the most accomplished of women, as every one says; and *what every one says must be true.*

I don't know that he has any bad designs upon her; but I know his temper too well, not to be apprehensive upon such long delays: and the ladies here have been for some time in fear for her: Lady Sarah in particular, who (as you must know) is a wise woman, says, that these delays, in the present case, must be from him, rather than from the lady.

He had always indeed a strong antipathy to marriage, and may think of playing his dog's tricks by her, as he has by so many others. If there's any danger of this, 'tis best to prevent it in time: for *when a thing is done, advice comes too late.*

He has always had the folly and impertinence to make a jest of me for using proverbs: but as they are the wisdom of whole nations and ages collected into a small compass, I am not to be shamed out of sentences that often contain more wisdom in them than the tedious harangues of most of our parsons and moralists. Let him laugh at them, if he pleases: you and I know better things, Mr. Belford— *Though you have kept company with a wolf, you have not learnt to howl of him.*

But nevertheless, you must let him know that I have written to you on this subject. I am ashamed to say it; but he has ever treated me as if I were a man of very common understanding; and would, perhaps, think never the better of the best advice in the world, for coming from me. *Those,* Mr. Belford, *who most love, are least set by.— But who would expect velvet to be made out of a sow's ear?*

I am sure he has no reason, however, to slight me as he does. He may and will be the better for me, if he outlives me; though he once told me to my face, that I might do as I would with my estate; for that he, for his part, *loved his liberty as much as he despised money.* And at another time, twitting me with my phrases, *that the man was above control, who wanted not either to borrow or flatter.* He thought, I suppose, that *I could not cover him with my wings, without*

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pecking at him with my bill; though I never used to be pecking at him, without very great occasion: and, God knows, he might have my very heart, if he would but endeavour to oblige me, by studying his own good; for that is all I desire of him. Indeed it was his poor mother that first spoiled him; and I have been but too indulgent to him since. A fine grateful disposition, you'll say, to *return evil for good!* but that was always his way. It is a good saying, and which was verified by him with a witness—*Children when little, make their parents fools; when great, mad.* Had his parents lived to see what I have seen of him, they would have been mad indeed.

This match, however, as the lady has such an extraordinary share of wisdom and goodness, might set all to rights; and if you can forward it, I would enable him to make whatever settlements he could wish; and should not be unwilling to put him in possession of another pretty estate besides. I am no covetous man, he knows. And indeed what is a covetous man to be likened to so fitly, as *to a dog in a wheel which roasts meat for others?* And what do I live for (as I have often said), but to see him and my two nieces well married and settled. May Heaven *settle him down to a better mind,* and turn his heart to more of goodness and consideration!

If the delays are on his side, I tremble for the lady; and, if on hers (as he tells my niece Charlotte), I could wish she were apprised that *delays are dangerous.* Excellent as she is, she ought not to depend on her merits with such a changeable fellow, and such a profest marriage-hater, as he has been. *Desert and reward,* I can assure her, *seldom keep company together.*

But let him remember that *vengeance, though it comes with leaden feet, strikes with iron hands.* If he behaves ill in this case, he may find it so. What a pity it is, that a man of his talents and learning should be so vile a rake! Alas! alas! *Une poignée de bonne vie vaut mieux que plein muy de clergée;* a handful of good life is better than a whole bushel of learning.

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You may throw in, too, as a friend, that, should he provoke me, it may not be too late for me to marry. My old friend Wycherly did so, when he was older than I am, on purpose to plague *his* nephew: and, in spite of this gout, I might have a child or two still. I have not been without some thoughts that way, when he has angered me more than ordinary: but these thoughts have gone off again hitherto, upon my considering that *the children of very young and very old men* (though I am not so very old neither) *last not long;* and that *old men, when they marry young women,* are said to *make much of death.* Yet who knows but that matrimony might be good against the gouty humours I am troubled with?

No man is everything—you, Mr. Belford, are a learned man. I am a peer. And do you (as you best know how) inculcate upon him the force of these wise sayings which follow, as well as those which went before; but yet so discreetly, as that he may not know that you *borrow your darts from my quiver.* These be they—*Happy is the man who knows his follies in his youth. He that lives well, lives long.* Again, *He that lives ill one year, will sorrow for it seven.* And again, as the Spaniards have it—*Who lives well sees afar off!* Far off indeed; for he sees into eternity, as a man may say. Then that other fine saying, *He who perishes in needless dangers, is the devil's martyr.* Another proverb I picked up at Madrid, when I accompanied Lord Lexington in his embassy to Spain, which might teach my nephew more mercy and compassion than is in his nature I doubt to show; which is this, *That he who pities another remembers himself.* And this that is going to follow, I am sure he has proved the truth of a hundred times, *That he who does what he will seldom does what he ought.* Nor is that unworthy of his notice, *Young men's frolics old men feel.* My devilish gout, God help me—but I will not say what I was going to say.

I remember that you yourself, complimenting me for my taste in pithy and wise sentences, said a thing that gave me a high opinion of you; and it was this: 'Men of talents,'

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said you, 'are sooner to be convinced by short sentences 'than by long preachments, because the short sentences drive 'themselves into the heart and stay there, while long dis-'courses, though ever so good, tire the attention; and one 'good thing drives out another, and so on till all is 'forgotten.'

May your good counsel, Mr. Belford, founded upon these hints which I have given, pierce his heart, and incite him to do what will be so happy for himself, and so necessary for the honour of that admirable lady whom I long to see his wife; and, if I may, I will not think of one for myself.

Should he abuse the confidence she has placed in him, I myself shall pray that vengeance may fall upon his head—*Raro*—I quite forget all my Latin; but I think it is, *Raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo:* where vice goes before, vengeance (sooner or later) will follow. But why do I translate these things for you?

I shall make no apologies for this trouble. I know how well you love him and me; and there is nothing in which you could serve us both more importantly, than in forwarding this match to the utmost of your power. When it is done, how shall I rejoice to see you at M. Hall! Meantime, I shall long to hear that you are likely to be successful with him; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

M.

[Mr. Lovelace having not returned an answer to Mr. Belford's expostulatory letter so soon as Mr. Belford expected, he wrote to him, expressing his apprehension that he had disobliged him by his honest freedom. Among other things, he says—]

I pass my time here at Watford, attending my dying uncle, very heavily. I cannot therefore, by any means, dispense with thy correspondence. And why shouldst thou punish me for having more conscience and more remorse than thyself? Thou who never thoughtest either

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conscience or remorse an honour to thee. And I have, besides, a melancholy story to tell thee, in relation to Belton and his Thomasine; and which may afford a lesson to all the keeping-class.

I have a letter from each of our three companions in the time. They have all the wickedness that thou hast, but not the wit. Some new rogueries do two of them boast of, which, I think, if completed, deserve the gallows.

I am far from hating intrigue upon principle. But to have awkward fellows plot, and commit their plots to paper, destitute of the seasonings, of the *acumen*, which is thy talent, how extremely shocking must their letters be!—But do thou, Lovelace, whether thou art, or art not, determined upon thy measures with regard to the fine lady in thy power, enliven my heavy heart by thy communications; and thou wilt oblige

Thy melancholy friend,

J. BELFORD.

—o—

LETTER XVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday Night, May 19.

WHEN I have opened my views to thee so amply as I have done in my former letters; and have told thee, that my principal design is but to bring virtue to a trial, that, *if* virtue, it need not be afraid of; and that the reward of it will be marriage (that is to say, if, after I have carried my point, I cannot prevail upon her to live with me the life of honour;* for that thou knowest is the wish of my heart); I am amazed at the repetition of thy wambling nonsense.

I am of opinion with thee, that some time hence, when I am *grown wiser*, I shall conclude that *there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in my present wild schemes.* But what is this saying, but that I must be *first* wiser?

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII.

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I do *not* intend *to let this matchless creature slide through my fingers.*

Art thou able to say half the things in her praise that I have said, and am continually saying or writing?

Her gloomy father cursed the sweet creature, because she put it out of his wicked power to compel her to have the man she hated. Thou knowest how little merit she has with me on this score — and shall I not *try* the virtue I intended, upon full proof, to *reward,* because her father is a tyrant?—Why art thou thus eternally reflecting upon so excellent a woman, as if thou wert assured she would *fail in the trial?*—Nay, thou declarest every time thou writest on the subject, that she *will,* that she *must* yield, *entangled as she is:* and yet makest her virtue the pretence of thy solicitude for her.

An instrument of the vile James Harlowe, dost thou call me?—O Jack! how could I curse thee!—*I* an *instrument* of that brother! of that sister! But mark the end—and thou shalt see what will become of that brother, and of that sister!

Play not against me my own acknowledged sensibilities, I desire thee. Sensibilities, which at the same time that they contradict thy charge of an *adamantine heart* in thy friend, thou hadst known nothing of, had I not communicated them to thee.

If I ruin such a virtue, sayest thou!—Eternal monotonist!—Again; *the most immaculate virtue may be ruined by men who have no regard to their honour, and who make a jest of the most solemn oaths,* &c. What must be the virtue that will be ruined *without oaths?* Is not the world full of these deceptions? And are not *lovers' oaths* a jest of hundreds of years' standing? And are not cautions against the perfidy of our sex a necessary part of the female education?

I do intend to endeavour to overcome *myself;* but I must first try if I cannot overcome *this lady.* Have I not said that the honour of her sex is concerned that I should *try?*

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Whenever thou meetest with a woman of but half her perfections, thou wilt marry—Do, Jack.

Can a girl be *degraded by trials*, who is not *overcome?*

I am glad that thou takest crime to thyself, for not endeavouring to convert the poor wretches whom *others* have ruined. I will not recriminate upon thee, Belford, as I might, when thou flatterest thyself that thou never ruinedst the morals of any young creature, who otherwise would not have been corrupted—the palliating consolation of a Hottentot heart, determined rather to gluttonise on the garbage of other foul feeders than to reform.—But tell me, Jack, wouldst thou have spared such a girl as my Rosebud, had I not, by my example, engaged thy generosity? Nor was ym Rosebud the only girl I spared:—When my power was acknowledged, who more merciful than thy friend?

> It is *resistance* that inflames desire,
> Sharpens the darts of love, and blows its fire.
> Love is disarmed that meets with too much ease;
> He languishes, and does not care to please.

The women know this as well as the men. They love to be addressed with spirit:

> And therefore 'tis their golden fruit they guard
> With so much care, to make possession hard.

Whence, for á by-reflection, the ardent, the complaisant gallant is so often preferred to the cold, the unadoring husband. And yet the sex do not consider that variety and novelty give the ardour and the obsequiousness; and that, were the rake as much used to them as the husband is, he would be [and is to *his own wife*, if married] *as* indifferent to their favours, as their husbands are; and the husband, in his turn, would, to another woman, be the rake. Let the women, upon the whole, take this lesson from a Lovelace—'Always to endeavour to make themselves as new to a husband, and to appear as elegant and as obliging to him, as they are desirous to appear to a *lover*, and actually were to *him*, as *such*; and then the *rake*, which all women love, will last longer in the *husband*, than it generally does.'

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But to return:—If I have not sufficiently cleared my conduct to thee in the above; I refer thee once more to mine of the 13th of last month.* And pr'ythee, Jack, lay me not under a necessity to repeat the same things so often. I hope thou readest what I write *more than once.*

I am not displeased that thou art so apprehensive of my resentment, that I cannot miss a day without making thee uneasy. Thy conscience, 'tis plain, tells thee that thou hast deserved my displeasure; and if it has convinced thee of *that,* it will make thee afraid of repeating thy fault. See that this be the consequence. Else, now that thou hast told me how I can punish thee, it is very likely that I do punish thee by my silence, although I have as much pleasure in writing on this charming subject, as thou canst have in reading what I write.

When a boy, if a dog ran away from me through fear, I generally looked about for a stone, or a stick; and if neither offered to my hand, I skimmed my hat after him to make him afraid for something. What signifies power, if we do not exert it?

Let my Lord know that thou *hast* scribbled to me. But give him not the contents of thy epistle. Though a parcel of crude stuff, *he* would think there was something in it. Poor arguments will do, when brought in favour of what we like. But the stupid peer little thinks that this lady is a rebel to Love. On the contrary, not only he, but all the world believe her to be a volunteer in his service.—So I shall incur blame, and she will be pitied, if anything happen amiss.

Since my Lord's heart is set upon this match, I have written already to let him know, 'That my unhappy 'character has given my beloved an ungenerous diffidence 'of me. That she is so mother-sick and father-fond, that 'she had rather return to Harlowe Place than marry. That 'she is even apprehensive that the step she has taken 'of going off with me will make the ladies of a family of 'such rank and honour as ours think slightly of her. That

* See vol. i. Letter LVIII.

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'therefore I desire his Lordship (though this hint, I tell 'him, must be very delicately touched) to write me such 'a letter as I can show her (let him treat me in it ever 'so freely, I shall not take it amiss, I tell him, because I 'know his Lordship takes pleasure in writing to me in a 'corrective style). That he may make what offers he 'pleases on the marriage. That I desire his presence at 'the ceremony; that I may take from his hand the greatest 'blessing that mortal man can give me.'

I have not absolutely told the lady that I would write to his Lordship to this effect; yet have given her reason to think I will. So that without the last necessity I shall not produce the answer I expect from him: for I am very loth, I own, to make use of any of my family's names for the furthering of my designs. And yet I must make all secure, before I pull off the mask. *Was not this my motive for bringing her hither?*

Thus thou seest that the old peer's letter came very seasonably. I thank thee for it. But as to his sentences, they cannot possibly do me good. I was early suffocated with his *wisdom of nations.* When a boy, I never asked anything of him, but out flew a *proverb;* and if the tendency of that was to deny me, I never could obtain the least favour. This gave me so great an aversion to the very word, that, when a child, I made it a condition with my tutor, who was an honest parson, that I would not read my Bible at all, if he would not excuse me one of the wisest books in it; to which, however, I had no other objection, than that it was called *The Proverbs.* And as for Solomon, he was then a hated character with me, not because of his polygamy, but because I had conceived him to be such another musty old fellow as my uncle.

Well, but let us leave old saws to old men. What signifies thy tedious whining over thy departing relation? Is it not generally agreed that he cannot recover? Will it not be kind in thee to put him out of his misery? I hear that he is pestered still with visits from doctors, and apothecaries, and surgeons; that they cannot cut so deep

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as the mortification has gone; and that in every visit, in every scarification, inevitable death is pronounced upon him. Why then do they keep tormenting him? Is it not to take away more of his living fleece than of his dead flesh?—When a man is given over, the fee should surely be refused. Are they not now robbing his heirs?—What hast thou to do, if the will be as thou'dst have it?—He sent for thee [did he not?] to close his eyes. He is but an *uncle*, is he?

Let me see, if I mistake not, it is in the Bible, or some other good book: can it be in Herodotus?—Oh, I believe it is in Josephus, a half sacred and half profane author. He tells us of a king of Syria put out of his pain by his prime minister, or one who deserved to be so for his contrivance. The story says, if I am right, that he spread a wet cloth over his face, which killing him, he reigned in his place. A notable fellow! Perhaps this wet cloth in the original is what we now call *laudanum;* a potion that overspreads the faculties, as the wet cloth did the face of the royal patient; and the translator knew not how to render it.

But how like a forlorn varlet thou subscribest, 'Thy 'melancholy friend, J. BELFORD!' Melancholy! For what? To stand by and see fair play between an old man and death? I thought thou hadst been more of a man; thou that art not afraid of an *acute* death, a sword's point, to be so plaguily hip'd at the consequences of a *chronical* one!—What though the scarificators work upon him day by day? It's only upon a *caput mortuum:* and pr'ythee *go to,* to use the *stylum veterum,* and learn of the *royal butchers;* who, for sport (a hundred times worse men than thy Lovelace), widow ten thousand at a brush, and make twice as many fatherless—learn of *them,* I say, how to support a *single* death.

But art thou sure, Jack, it is a mortification?—My uncle once gave promises of such a root and branch distemper: but, alas! it turned to a smart gout-fit; and *I had* the mortification instead of *him.*—I have heard that bark, in proper doses, will arrest a mortification in its progress, and at last

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cure it. Let thy uncle's surgeon know, that it is worth more than his ears if he prescribe one grain of the bark.

I wish *my* uncle had given *me* the opportunity of setting thee a better example: thou shouldst have seen what a brave fellow I had been. And had I had occasion to write, my conclusion would have been this: 'I hope the old Trojan's 'happy. In that hope, I am so; and

'Thy rejoicing friend,

'R. LOVELACE.'

Dwell not always, Jack, upon one subject. Let me have poor Belton's story. The sooner the better. If I can be of service to him, tell him he may command me either in purse or person. Yet the former with a freer will than the latter; for how can I leave my goddess? But I'll issue my commands to my other vassals to attend thy summons. If ye want *head,* let *me* know. If not, my quota, on this occasion, is *money.*

—o—

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Saturday, May 20.

NOT one word will I reply to such an abandoned wretch, as thou hast shown thyself to be in thine of last night. I will leave the lady to the protection of that Power who only can work miracles; and to her own merits. Still I have hopes that these will save her.

I will proceed, as thou desirest, to poor Belton's case; and the rather, as it has thrown me into such a train of thinking upon our past lives, our present courses, and our future views, as may be of service to both, if I can give due weight to the reflections that arise from it.

The poor man made me a visit on *Thursday,* in this my melancholy attendance. He began with complaints of his ill health and spirits, his hectic cough, and his increased malady of spitting blood; and then led to his story.

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A confounded one it is; and which highly aggravates his other maladies: for it has come out that his Thomasine (who, truly, would be new christened, you know, that her name might be nearer in sound to the Christian name of the man whom she pretended to doat upon), has for many years carried on an intrigue with a fellow who had been hostler to her father (an innkeeper at Darking); of whom, at the expense of poor Belton, she has made a gentleman; and managed it so, that having the art to make herself his cashier, she has been unable to account for large sums which he thought forthcoming at demand, and had trusted to her custody, in order to pay off a mortgage upon his parental estate in Kent, which his heart had run upon leaving clear, but which cannot now be done, and will soon be foreclosed. And yet she has so long passed for his wife, that he knows not what to resolve upon about her; nor about the two boys he was so fond of, supposing them to be his; whereas now he begins to doubt his share in them.

So KEEPING don't do, Lovelace. 'Tis *not* the eligible life. 'A man may *keep a woman,* said the poor fellow to 'me, but *not his estate!*—Two interests!—Then, my totter-'ing fabric!' pointing to his emaciated carcass.

We do well to value ourselves upon our *liberty,* or, to speak more properly, upon the liberties we take! We had need to run down matrimony as we do, and to make that state the subject of our frothy jests; when we frequently render ourselves (for this of Tom's is not a singular case) the dupes and tools of women who generally govern us (by arts our wise heads penetrate not) more absolutely than a wife would attempt to do.

Let us consider this point a little; and that upon our own *principles,* as *libertines,* setting aside what is exacted from us by the *laws of our country,* and its *customs;* which, nevertheless, we cannot get over, till we have got over almost all moral obligations, as members of society.

In the first place, let us consider (we, who are in possession of estates by *legal descent*) how we should have liked to have been such naked destitute varlets, as we must have

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been, had *our* fathers been as wise as ourselves; and despised matrimony as we do—and then let us ask ourselves, if we ought not to have the same regard for *our* posterity, as we are glad our fathers had for *theirs?*

But this, perhaps, is too *moral* a consideration.—To proceed therefore to those considerations which will be more striking to *us:* How can we reasonably expect economy or frugality (or anything indeed but riot and waste) from creatures who have an *interest,* and must therefore have *views,* different from our own?

They know the uncertain tenure (our fickle humours) by which they hold: and is it to be wondered at, supposing them to be provident harlots, that they should endeavour, if they have the *power, to lay up against a rainy day?* or, if they have *not* the power, that they should squander all they can come at, when they are sure of *nothing but the present hour;* and when the life they live, and the sacrifices they have made, put conscience and honour out of the question?

Whereas a *wife,* having the same family interest with her husband, lies not under either the same *apprehensions* or *temptations;* and has not broken through (of *necessity,* at least, has not) *those* restraints which education has fastened upon her: and if she make a private purse, which we are told by anti-matrimonialists, all wives love to do, and has children, it goes all into the same family at the long-run.

Then as to the great article of fidelity to your bed.—Are not women of family, who are well educated, under greater restraints than creatures, who, if they ever *had* reputation, sacrifice it to sordid interest, or to more sordid appetite, the moment they give up to you? Does not the example you furnish, of having succeeded with her, give encouragement for *others* to attempt her likewise? For with all her blandishments, can any man be so credulous, or so vain, as to believe that the woman *he* could persuade, *another* may not prevail upon?

Adultery is so capital a guilt, that even rakes and libertines, if not wholly abandoned, and as I may say, *invited* by a woman's levity, disavow and condemn it: but here, in

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a state of KEEPING, a woman is in no danger of incurring (*legally*, at least) that guilt; and you yourself have broken through and overthrown in her all the fences and boundaries of moral honesty, and the modesty and reserves of her sex. And what tie shall hold her against inclination, or interest? And what shall deter an attempter?

While a husband has this security from *legal* sanctions, that if his wife be detected in a criminal conversation with a man of fortune (the *most* likely by bribes to seduce her), he may recover very great damages, and procure a divorce besides: which, to say nothing of the ignominy, is a consideration that must have some force upon *both* parties. And a wife must be vicious indeed, and a reflection upon a man's own choice, who, for the sake of change, and where there are no qualities to seduce, nor affluence to corrupt, will run so many hazards to injure her husband in the tenderest of all points.

But there are difficulties in procuring a divorce—[and so there ought]—and none, says the rake, in parting with a mistress whenever you suspect her; or whenever you are weary of her, and have a mind to change her for another.

But must not the man be a brute indeed, who can cast off a woman whom he has seduced [if he take her from the town, that's another thing], without some flagrant reason; something that will better justify him to *himself*, as well as to *her*, and to the *world*, than mere *power* and *novelty*?

But I don't see, if we judge by *fact*, and by the *practice* of all we have been acquainted with of the *keeping-class*, that we know how to part with them when we have them.

That we know we *can* if we *will*, is all we have for it: and this leads us to bear many things from a *mistress*, which we would not from a *wife*. But if we are good-natured and humane: if the woman has *art:* [and what woman *wants* it, who has fallen by *art?* and to whose precarious situation *art* is so necessary?] if you have given her the credit of being called by your name: if you have a settled place of abode, and have received and paid visits in her company, as your wife: if she has brought you children—

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you will allow that these are strong obligations upon you in the world's eye, as well as to your own heart, against tearing yourself from such close connections. She will stick to you as your skin: and it will be next to flaying yourself to cast her off.

Even if there be *cause* for it, by infidelity, she will have managed ill, if she have not her defenders. Nor did I ever know a cause or a person so *bad* as to want advocates, either from ill-will to the one, or pity to the other: and you will then be thought a hard-hearted miscreant: and even were she to go off without credit to *herself*, she will leave *you* as little; especially with all those whose good opinion a man would wish to cultivate.

Well, then, shall this poor privilege, that we may part with a woman if we *will*, be deemed a balance for the other inconveniences? Shall it be thought by *us*, who are men of family and fortune, an equivalent for giving up *equality of degree*; and taking for the partner of our bed, and very probably more than the partner in our estates (to the breach of all family rule and order), a low-born, a low-educated creature, who has not brought anything into the common stock; and can possibly make no returns for the solid benefits she receives, but those libidinous ones, which a man cannot boast of, but to *his* disgrace, nor think of, but to the shame of *both*?

Moreover, as the man advances in years, the fury of his libertinism will go off. He will have different aims and pursuits, which will diminish his appetite to ranging, and make such a regular life as the matrimonial and family life, palatable to him, and every day more palatable.

If he has children, and has reason to think them *his*, and if his lewd courses have left him *any* estate, he will have cause to regret the *restraint* his boasted *liberty* has laid him under, and the valuable *privilege* it has deprived him of; when he finds that it must descend to some relation, for whom, whether near or distant, he cares not one farthing; and who perhaps (if a man of virtue) has held him in the utmost contempt for his dissolute life.

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And were we to suppose his estate in his power to bequeath as he pleases; why should a man resolve, for the gratifying of his foolish humour only, to bastardise his race? Why should he wish to expose his children to the scorn and insults of the rest of the world? Why should he, whether they are sons or daughters, lay them under the necessity of complying with proposals of marriage, either *inferior as to fortune*, or *unequal as to age?* Why should he deprive the children he loves, who themselves may be guilty of no fault, of the respect they would wish to have, and to deserve; and of the opportunity of associating themselves with *proper*, that is to say, with *reputable* company? and why should he make them think themselves under obligation to every person of character, who will vouchsafe to visit them? What little reason, in a word, would such children have to bless their father's obstinate defiance of the laws and customs of his country; and for giving them a mother, of whom they could not think with honour; to whose *crime* it was that they owed their very beings, and whose example it was their duty to shun?

If the education and morals of these children are left to chance, as too generally they are (for the man who has humanity and a feeling heart, and who is capable of fondness for his offspring, I take it for granted will marry), the case is still worse; his crime is perpetuated, as I may say, by his children: and the sea, the army, perhaps the highway for the boys; the common for the girls; too often point out the way to a worse catastrophe.

What therefore, upon the whole, do we get by treading in these crooked paths, but danger, disgrace, and a too late repentance?

And after all, do we not frequently become the cullies of our own libertinism; sliding into the very state with those half-worn-out doxies, which perhaps we might have entered into with their ladies; at least with their superiors both in degree and fortune? and all the time lived handsomely like ourselves; not sneaking into holes and corners; and when we crept abroad with our women, looking about us, and at

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every one that passed us, as if we were confessedly accountable to the censures of all honest people.

My cousin Tony Jenyns, thou knewest. He had not the actively mischievous spirit, that thou, Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and *myself* have: but he imbibed the same notions we do, and carried them into practice.

How did he prate against wedlock! how did he strut about as a *wit* and a *smart!* and what a *wit* and a *smart* did all the boys and girls of our family (myself among the rest, then an urchin) think him, for the airs he gave himself?—Marry! No, not for the world; what man of sense would bear the insolences, the petulances, the expensiveness of a wife! He could not for the heart of him think it tolerable, that a woman of *equal* rank and fortune, and, as it might happen, *superior* talents to his own, should look upon herself to have a right to share the benefit of that fortune which she brought him.

So, after he had fluttered about the town for two or three years, in all which time he had a better opinion of himself than anybody else had, what does he do, but enter upon an affair with his fencing-master's daughter?

He succeeds; takes private lodgings for her at Hackney; visits her by stealth; both of them tender of reputations that were *extremely* tender, but which neither had quite given up; for rakes of either sex are always the last to condemn or cry down themselves: visited by nobody, nor visiting: the life of a thief, or of a man beset by creditors, afraid to look out of his own house, or to be seen abroad with her. And thus went on for twelve years, and though he had a good estate, hardly making both ends meet; for though no glare, there was no economy; and beside, he had every year a child, and very fond of his children was he. But none of them lived above three years. And being now, on the death of the dozenth, grown as dully sober, as if he had been a real husband, his good Mrs. Thomas (for he had not permitted her to take his own name) prevailed upon him to think the loss of their children a judgment upon the parents for their wicked way of life [a

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time will come, Lovelace, if we live to advanced years, in which reflection will take hold of the enfeebled mind] ; and then it was not difficult for his woman to induce him, by way of compounding with Heaven, to marry her. When this was done, he had leisure to sit down, and contemplate ; and to recollect the many offers of persons of family and fortune which he had declined in the prime of life: his expenses *equal* at least: his reputation not only *less*, but *lost:* his enjoyments *stolen:* his partnership *unequal*, and such as he had always been ashamed of. But the woman said, that after twelve or thirteen years' cohabitation, Tony did an honest thing by her. And that was all my poor cousin got by making his old mistress his new wife—not a drum, not a trumpet, not a fife, not a tabret, nor the expectation of a new joy to animate him on!

What Belton will do with his Thomasine I know not! nor care I to advise him: for I see the poor fellow does not like that anybody should curse her but himself. This he does very heartily. And so low is he reduced, that he blubbers over the reflection upon his past fondness for her cubs, and upon his present doubts of their being his: 'What a damned thing is it, Belford, if Tom and Hal 'should be the hostler dog's puppies and not mine!'

Very true! and I think the strong health of the chubby-faced muscular whelps confirms the too great probability.

But I say not so to him.

You, he says, are such a gay, lively mortal, that this sad tale would make no impression upon you: especially now that your whole heart is engaged as it is. *Mowbray* would be too violent upon it: he has not, he says, a feeling heart. *Tourville* has no discretion: and, a pretty jest! although he and his Thomasine lived without reputation in the world (people guessing that they were not married, notwithstanding she went by his name), yet 'he would not *too much* 'discredit the *cursed ingrate* neither!'

Could a man act a weaker part, had he been really married; and were he sure he was going to separate from the mother of his own children?

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I leave this as a lesson upon thy heart, without making any application: only with this remark, 'That after we 'libertines have indulged our licentious appetites, reflecting '(in the conceit of our vain hearts), both with our lips and 'by our lives, upon our ancestors and the good old ways, 'we find out, when we come to years of discretion, if we 'live till then (what all who knew us found out before, that 'is to say, we find out), our own despicable folly; that those 'good old ways would have been best for *us*, as well as for 'the rest of the world; and that in every step we have 'deviated from them we have only exposed our vanity and 'our ignorance at the same time.'

J. BELFORD.

—o—

LETTER XIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday, May 20.

I AM pleased with the sober reflection with which thou concludest thy last; and I thank thee for it. Poor Belton! —I did not think his Thomasine would have proved so very a devil. But this must everlastingly be the risk of a keeper, who takes up with a low-bred girl. This I never did. Nor had I occasion to do it. Such a one as *I*, Jack, needed only, till now, to shake the stateliest tree, and the mellowed fruit dropt into my mouth:—always of Montaigne's taste thou knowest:—thought it a glory to subdue a girl of family.—More truly delightful to me the seduction progress than the crowned act: for that's a vapour, a bubble! and most cordially do I thank thee for thy indirect hint, that I am right in my present pursuit.

From such a woman as Miss Harlowe, a man is secured from all the inconveniences thou expatiatest upon.

Once more, therefore, do I thank thee, Belford, for thy approbation!—A man need not, as thou sayest, sneak into *holes* and *corners*, and shun the day, in the company of such *a woman as this*. How friendly in thee, thus to abet the

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favourite purpose of my heart!—nor can it be a disgrace to me, to permit *such a lady* to be called by my name!—nor shall I be at all concerned about the *world's censure,* if I live to the *years of discretion,* which thou mentionest, should I be taken in, and prevailed upon to tread with her the good old path of my ancestors.

A blessing on thy heart, thou honest fellow! I *thought* thou wert in jest, and but acquitting thyself of an engagement to Lord M. when thou wert pleading for matrimony in behalf of this lady!—It could not be principle, I knew, in thee: it could not be compassion—a little *envy* indeed I suspected!—But now I see thee once more thyself: and once more, say I, a blessing on thy heart, thou true friend, and very honest fellow!

Now will I proceed with courage in all my schemes, and oblige thee with the continued narrative of my progressions towards bringing them to effect!—but I could not forbear to interrupt my story, to show my gratitude.

—o—

LETTER XX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

And now will I favour thee with a brief account of our present situation.

From the highest to the lowest we are all extremely happy.—*Dorcas* stands well in her lady's graces. *Polly* has asked her advice in relation to a courtship affair of her own. No oracle ever gave better. *Sally* has had a quarrel with her woollendraper; and made my charmer lady-chancellor in it. She blamed Sally for behaving tyrannically to a man who loves her. Dear creature! to stand against a glass, and to shut her eyes because she will not see her face in it!—Mrs. *Sinclair* has paid *her* court to so unerring a judge, by requesting her advice with regard to both nieces.

This the way we have been in for several days with the people below. Yet *sola* generally at her meals, and seldom

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at other times in their company. They now, used to her ways [*perseverance must conquer*], never press her; so when they meet, all is civility on both sides. Even married people, I believe, Jack, prevent abundance of quarrels, by seeing one another *but seldom.*

But how stands it between thyself and the lady, methinks thou askest, since her abrupt departure from thee, and undutiful repulse of Wednesday morning?

Why, pretty well in the main. Nay, *very* well. For why? the dear saucy-face knows not how to help herself. Can fly to no other protection. And has, besides, overheard a conversation [who would have thought she had been so near?] which passed between Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Martin, and myself, that very Wednesday afternoon; which has set her heart at ease with respect to several doubtful points.

Such as, particularly, 'Mrs. Fretchville's unhappy state of 'mind—most humanely pitied by Miss Martin, who knows 'her very well—the husband she has lost, and herself (as 'Sally says), lovers from their cradles. Pity from one begets 'pity from another, be the occasion for it either strong or 'weak; and so many circumstances were given to poor Mrs. 'Fretchville's distress, that it was impossible but my beloved 'must *extremely* pity *her* whom the less tender-hearted Miss 'Martin *greatly* pitied.

'My Lord M.'s gout his only hindrance from visiting my 'spouse. Lady Betty and Miss Montague soon expected in 'town.

'My earnest desire signified to have my spouse receive 'those ladies in her own house, if Mrs. Fretchville would 'but know her own mind; and I pathetically lamented the 'delay occasioned by her not knowing it.

'My intention to stay at Mrs. Sinclair's, *as I said I had 'told them before,* while my spouse resides in her own house '(when Mrs. Fretchville could be brought to quit it), in 'order to gratify her utmost punctilio.

'My passion for my beloved (which, as I told them in a 'high and fervent accent, was the truest that man could 'have for woman) I boasted of. It was, in short, I said, of

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'the *true platonic kind;* or I had no notion of what platonic 'love was.'

So it is, Jack; and must end as platonic love generally does end.

'Sally and Mrs. Sinclair next praised, *but not grossly,* my 'beloved. Sally particularly admired her purity; called it 'exemplary; yet (to avoid suspicion) expressed her thoughts 'that she was *rather over-nice,* if she might presume to say 'so *before me.* But nevertheless she applauded me for the 'strict observation I made of my vow.

'I more freely blamed her reserves to me; called her cruel; 'inveighed against her relations; doubted her love. Every 'favour I asked of her denied me. Yet my behaviour to her 'as pure and delicate when alone, as when before them. 'Hinted at something that had passed between us that very 'day, that showed her indifference to me in so strong a light, 'that I could not bear it. But that I would ask her for her 'company to the play of *Venice Preserved,* given out for 'Saturday night as a benefit-play; the prime actors to be 'in it; and this, to see if I were to be denied every favour. '—Yet, for my own part, I *loved not tragedies;* though she 'did, for the sake of the instruction, the warning, and the 'example generally given in them.

'I had too much *feeling,* I said. There was enough in 'the world to make our hearts sad, without carrying grief 'into our diversions, and making the distresses of others our 'own.

True enough, Belford; and I believe, generally speaking, that all the men of our cast are of my mind—They love not any tragedies but those in which they themselves act the parts of tyrants and executioners; and afraid to trust themselves with serious and solemn reflections, run to comedies, in order to laugh away compunction on the distresses they have occasioned, and to find examples of men as immoral as themselves. For very few of our comic performances, as thou knowest, give us good ones.—I answer, however, for myself—yet thou, I think, on recollection, lovest to deal in the *lamentable.*

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Sally answered for Polly, who was absent; Mrs. Sinclair for herself, and for all her acquaintance, even for Miss Partington, in preferring the comic to the tragic scenes.—And I believe they are right; for the devil's in it, if a confided in rake does not give a girl enough of tragedy in his comedy.

'I asked Sally to oblige my fair one with her company. 'She was engaged [that was right, thou'lt suppose]. I asked 'Mrs. Sinclair's leave for Polly. To be sure, she answered, 'Polly would think it an honour to attend Mrs. Lovelace: 'but the poor thing was tender-hearted; and as the tragedy 'was deep, would weep herself blind.

'Sally, meantime, objected Singleton, that I might answer 'the objection, and save my beloved the trouble of making 'it, or debating the point with me; and on this occasion I 'regretted that her brother's projects were not laid aside; 'since, if they had been given up, I would have gone in 'person to bring up the ladies of my family to attend my 'spouse.

'I then, from a letter just before received from one in her 'father's family, warned them of a person who had under-'taken to find us out, and whom I thus in writing [having 'called for pen and ink] described, that they might arm all 'the family against him—"A sun-burnt, pock-fretten sailor, "ill-looking, big-boned; his stature about six feet; a "heavy eye, an overhanging brow, a deck-treading stride "in his walk; a couteau generally by his side; lips parched "from his gums, as if by staring at the sun in hot climates; "a brown coat; a coloured handkerchief about his neck; "an oaken plant in his hand near as long as himself, and "proportionably thick."

'No questions asked by this fellow must be answered. 'They should call *me* to him. But not let my beloved know 'a tittle of this, so long as it could be helped. And I added, 'that if her brother or Singleton came, and if they behaved 'civilly, I would, for *her sake,* be civil to *them:* and in this 'case, she had nothing to do but to own her marriage, and 'there could be no pretence for violence on either side. But 'most fervently I swore, that if she were *conveyed away,*

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'either by *persuasion* or *force*, I would directly, *on missing* 'her but one day, go to demand her at Harlowe Place, 'whether she were there or not; and if I recovered not a 'sister, I would have a brother; and should find out a cap- 'tain of a ship as well as he.'

And now, Jack, dost thou think she'll attempt to get from me, do what I will?

'Mrs. Sinclair began to be afraid of mischief in her house '—I was apprehensive that she would overdo the matter, 'and be out of character. I therefore winked at her. She 'primmed; nodded, to show she took me; twanged out a 'high-ho through her nose, lapped one horse-lip over the 'other, and was silent.'

Here's preparation, Belford!—Dost think I will throw it all away for anything thou canst say, or Lord M. write?—*No, indeed*—as my charmer says, when she bridles.

And what must necessarily be the consequence of all this with regard to my beloved's behaviour to me? Canst thou doubt that it was all complaisance next time she admitted me into her presence?

Thursday we were very happy. All the morning *extremely* happy. I kissed her charming hand.—I need not describe to thee her hand and arm. When thou sawest her, I took notice that thy eyes dwelt upon them whenever thou couldst spare them from that beauty spot of wonders, her face—*fifty* times kissed her hand, I believe—once her cheek, intending her lip, but so rapturously, that she could not help seeming angry.

Had she not thus kept me at arm's length; had she not denied me those innocent liberties which our sex from step to step aspire to; could I but have gained access to her in her hours of heedlessness and dishabille [for full dress creates dignity, augments consciousness, and compels distance]; we had familiarised to each other long ago. But keep her up ever so late, meet her ever so early, by breakfast time she is dressed for the day, and at her *earliest hour*, as nice as others dressed. All her forms thus kept up, wonder not

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that I have made so little progress in the proposed trial.—But how must all this distance stimulate!

Thursday morning, as I said, we were extremely happy—about *noon*, she numbered the hours she had been with me; all of them to me but as one minute; and desired to be left to herself. I was loth to comply: but observing the sunshine begin to shut in, I yielded.

I dined out. Returning, I talked of the house, and of Mrs. Fretchville—had seen Mennell—had pressed him to get the widow to quit: she pitied Mrs. Fretchville [another good effect of the overheard conversation]—had written to Lord M. expected an answer soon from him. I was admitted to sup with her. I urged for her approbation or correction of my written terms. She again promised an answer as soon as she had heard from Miss Howe.

Then I pressed for her company to the play on Saturday night. She made objections, as I had foreseen: her brother's projects, warmth of the weather, &c. But in such a manner, as if half afraid to disoblige me [another happy effect of the overheard conversation]. I soon got over these, therefore; and she consented to favour me.

Friday passed as the day before.

Here were two happy days to both. Why cannot I make every day equally happy? It looks *as if it were in my power to do so.* Strange, I should thus delight in teasing a woman I so dearly love! I must, I doubt, have something in my temper like Miss Howe, who loves to plague the man who puts himself in her power.—But I could not do thus by such an angel as this, did I not believe that, after her probation time shall be expired, and if she be not to be brought to *cohabitation* (my darling view), I shall reward her as she wishes.

Saturday is half over. We are equally happy—preparing for the play. Polly has offered her company, and is accepted. I have directed her where to weep: and this not only to show her humanity [a weeping eye indicates a gentle heart], but to have a pretence to hide her face with a fan or handkerchief.—Yet Polly is far from being every man's girl; and we shall sit in the gallery greenbox.

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The woes of others, so well represented as those of Belvidera particularly will be, must, I hope, unlock and open my charmer's heart. Whenever I have been able to prevail upon a girl to permit me to attend her to a play, I have thought myself sure of her. The female heart (all gentleness and harmony by nature) expands, and forgets its forms, when its attention is carried out of itself at an agreeable or affecting entertainment—music, and perhaps a collation afterwards, co-operating.

Indeed I have no hope of such an effect here; but I have more than one end to answer by getting her to a play. To name but one—Dorcas has a *master-key*, as I have told thee. —But it were worth while to carry her to the play of *Venice Preserved*, were it but to show her that there have been and may be, much deeper distresses than she can possibly know.

Thus exceedingly happy are we at present. I hope we shall not find any of Nat. Lee's left-handed gods at work, to dash our bowl of joy with wormwood.

R. LOVELACE.

—o—

LETTER XXI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, May 19.

I WOULD not, if I could help it, be so continually brooding over the dark and gloomy face of my condition [all nature, you know, my dear, and everything in it, has a bright and a gloomy side] as to be thought unable to enjoy a more hopeful prospect. And this, not only for my own sake, but for yours, who take such generous concern in all that befalls me.

Let me tell you then, my dear, that I have known four-and-twenty hours together not unhappy ones, my situation considered.

[She then gives the particulars of the conversation which she had overheard between Mr. Lovelace and Mrs. Sinclair

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and Miss Martin; but accounts more minutely than he had done for the opportunity she had of overhearing it, unknown to them.

She gives the reasons she has to be pleased with what she heard from each: but is shocked at the measure he is resolved to take, if he misses her but for one day. Yet is pleased that he proposes to avoid *aggressive* violence, if her brother and he meet in town.]

Even Dorcas, says she, appears less exceptionable to me than before; and I cannot but pity her for her neglected education, as it is matter of so much regret to *herself:* else there would not be much in it; as the low and illiterate are the most useful people in the commonwealth (since such constitute the labouring part of the public); and as a lettered education but too generally sets people above those servile offices by which the business of the world is carried on. Nor have I any doubt but there are, take the world through, twenty happy people among the unlettered, to one among those who have had a school education.

This, however, concludes not against learning or letters; since one would wish to lift to some little distinction, and more genteel usefulness, those who have capacity, and whose parentage one respects, or whose services one would wish to reward.

Were my mind quite at ease, I should enlarge, perhaps not unusefully, upon this subject; for I have considered it with as much attention as my years, and little experience and observation, will permit.

But the extreme illiterateness and indocility of this maid are surprising, considering that she wants not inquisitiveness, appears willing to learn, and in other respects, has quick parts. This confirms to me what I have heard remarked, that there is a *docible season,* a learning-time, as I may say, for every person, in which the mind may be led, step by step, from the lower to the higher (year by year), to improvement. How industriously ought these seasons, as they offer, to be taken hold of by tutors, parents and other,

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friends, to whom the cultivation of the genius of children and youth is committed; since, one elapsed, and no foundation laid, they hardly ever return!—And yet it must be confessed that there are some geniuses, which, like some fruits, ripen not till late. And industry and perseverance will do prodigious things—but for a learner to have those first rudiments to master at twenty years of age, suppose, which others are taught, and they themselves might have attained at ten, what an up-hill labour?

These kind of observations you have always wished me to intersperse, as they arise to my thoughts. But it is a sign that my prospects are a little mended, or I should not, among so many more interesting ones that my mind has been of late filled with, have had heart's ease enough to make them.

Let me give you my *reflections* on my more hopeful prospects.

I am now, in the first place, better able to account for the delays about the house than I was before—Poor Mrs. Fretchville!—Though I know her not, I pity her!—Next, it looks well, that he had apprised the women (before this conversation with them) of his intention to stay in this house, after I was removed to the other. By the tone of his voice he seemed concerned for the appearance this new delay would have with me.

So handsomely did Miss Martin express herself of me, that I am sorry, methinks, that I judged so hardly of her, when I first came hither—free people may go a great way, but not all the way: and as such are generally unguarded, precipitate, and thoughtless, the same quickness, changeableness, and *suddenness* of spirit, as I may call it, may intervene (if the heart be not corrupted) to recover them to thought and duty.

His reason for declining to go in person to bring up the ladies of his family, while my brother and Singleton continue their machinations, carries no bad face with it; and one may the rather allow for *their* expectations, that so proud a spirit as his should attend them for this purpose, as he speaks of them sometimes as persons of punctilio.

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Other reasons I will mention for my being easier in my mind than I was before I overheard this conversation.

Such as the advice he has received in relation to Singleton's mate; which agrees but too well with what you, my dear, wrote to me in yours of May the 10th.*

His not intending to acquaint *me* with it.

His cautions to the servants about the sailor, if he should come and make inquiries about us.

His resolution to avoid violence, were he to fall in either with my brother or this Singleton; and the easy method he has chalked out, in this case, to prevent mischief; since I need only *not to deny* my being his. But yet I should be exceedingly unhappy in my own opinion to be driven into such a tacit acknowledgment to any new persons, till I am so, although I have been led (so much against my liking) to give countenance to the belief of the persons below that we are married.

I think myself obliged, from what passed between Mr. Lovelace and me on Wednesday, and from what I overheard him say, to consent to go with him to the play; and the rather, as he had the discretion to propose one of the nieces to accompany me.

I cannot but acknowledge that I am pleased to find that he has actually written to Lord M.

I have promised to give Mr. Lovelace an answer to his proposals as soon as I have heard from you, my dear, on the subject.

I hope that in my next letter I shall have reason to confirm these favourable appearances. Favourable I must think them in the wreck I have suffered.

I hope, that in the trial which you hint may happen between *me* and *myself* (as you † express it), if he should so behave as to oblige me to leave him, I shall be able to act in such a manner as to bring no discredit upon myself in your eye; and that is all now that I have to wish for. But if I value him so much as you are pleased to suppose I do, the trial, which you imagine will be so difficult to me, will

* See Letter III. of this volume. † See Letter XIV. of this volume.

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not, I conceive, be upon getting from him, when the means to affect my escape are lent me; but how I shall behave when got from him; and if, like the Israelites of old, I shall be so weak as to wish to return to my Egyptian bondage.

I think it will not be amiss, notwithstanding the present favourable appearances, that you should perfect the scheme (whatever it be) which you tell me* you have thought of, in order to procure for me an asylum, in case of necessity. Mr. Lovelace is certainly a deep and dangerous man; and it is therefore but prudence to be watchful, and to be provided against the worst. Lord bless me, my dear, how am I reduced!—Could I ever have thought to be in such a situation, as to be obliged to stay with a man, of whose honour by me I could have but the *shadow* of a doubt!—But I will look forward, and hope the best.

I am certain that your letters are safe. Be perfectly easy, therefore, on that head.

Mr. Lovelace will never be out of my company by his good-will, otherwise I have no doubt that I am mistress of my goings-out and comings-in; and did I think it needful, and were I not afraid of my brother and Captain Singleton, I would oftener put it to trial.

—o—

LETTER XXII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Saturday, May 20.

I DID not know, my dear, that you deferred giving an answer to Mr. Lovelace's proposals till you had my opinion of them. A particular hand, occasionally going to town, will leave this at Wilson's, that no delay may be made on that account.

I never had any doubt of the man's justice and generosity in matters of settlement; and all his relations are as noble in their spirits as in their descent: but *now*, it may not be

* See Letter XIV. of this volume.

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amiss for you to wait, to see what returns my Lord makes to his letter of invitation.

The scheme I think of is this:

There is a person whom I believe you have seen with me, her name Townsend, who is a great dealer in Indian silks, Brussels and French laces, cambrics, linen, and other valuable goods; which she has a way of coming at duty-free; and has a great vend for them (and for other curiosities which she imports) in the private families of the gentry round us.

She has her days of being in town, and then is at a chamber she rents at an inn in Southwark, where she keeps patterns of all her silks, and much of her portable goods, for the conveniency of her London customers. But her place of residence, and where she has her principal warehouse, is at Deptford, for the opportunity of getting her goods on shore.

She was first brought to me by my mother, to whom she was recommended on the supposal of my speedy marriage, 'that I might have an opportunity to be as fine as a 'princess,' was my mother's expression, 'at a moderate 'expense.'

Now, my dear, I must own that I do not love to encourage these contraband traders. What is it, but bidding defiance to the laws of our country, when we do, and hurting fair traders; and at the same time robbing our prince of his legal due, to the diminution of those duties which possibly must be made good by new levies upon the public?

But, however, Mrs. Townsend and I, though I have not yet had dealings with her, are upon a very good foot of understanding. She is a sensible woman; she has been abroad, and often goes abroad in the way of her business, and gives very entertaining accounts of all she has seen.

And having applied to me to recommend her to you (as it is her view to be known to young ladies who are likely to change their condition), I am sure I can engage her to give you protection at her house at Deptford; which she says is a populous village, and one of the last, I should think,

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in which you would be sought for. She is not much there, you will believe, by the course of her dealings, but, no doubt, must have somebody on the spot, in whom she can confide: and there, perhaps, you might be safe till your cousin comes. And I should not think it amiss that you write to him out of hand. I cannot suggest to you *what* you should write. That must be left to your own discretion. For you will be afraid, no doubt, of the consequence of a variance between the two men.

But, notwithstanding all this, and were I sure of getting you safely out of his hands, I will nevertheless forgive you, were you to make all up with him, and marry to-morrow. Yet I will proceed with my projected scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend; though I hope there will be no occasion to prosecute it, since your prospects seem to be changed, and since you have had *twenty-four not unhappy hours together*. How my indignation rises for this poor consolation in the courtship [*courtship* must I call it?] of such a woman! Let me tell you, my dear, that were you once your own absolute and independent mistress, I should be tempted, notwithstanding all I have written, to wish you the wife of any man in the world, rather than the wife either of Lovelace or of Solmes.

Mrs. Townsend, as I have recollected, has two brothers, each a master of a vessel; and who knows, as she and they have concerns together, but that, in case of need, you may have a whole ship's crew at your devotion? If Lovelace give you cause to leave him, take no thought for the people at Harlowe Place. Let *them* take care of one another. It is a care they are *used* to. The law will help to secure *them*. The wretch is no assassin, no night-murderer. He is an *open*, because a *fearless* enemy; and should he attempt anything that would make him obnoxious to the laws of society, you might have a fair riddance of him, either by flight or the gallows; no matter which.

Had you not been so minute in your account of the circumstances that attended the opportunity you had of overhearing the dialogue between Mr. Lovelace and two of the

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women, I should have thought the conference contrived on purpose for your ear.

I showed Mr. Lovelace's proposals to Mr. Hickman, who had chambers once in Lincoln's Inn, being designed for the law, had his elder brother lived. He looked so wise, so proud, and so important, upon the occasion; and wanted to take so much consideration about them—would take them home if I pleased—and weigh them well—and so forth—and the like—and all that—that I had no patience with him, and snatched them back with anger.

Oh dear!—to be so angry, an't please me, for his zeal!

Yes, zeal without knowledge, I said—like most other zeals—if there were no objections that struck him at once, there were none.

So *hasty*, dearest Madam——

And so *slow*, un-dearest sir, I could have said—But SURELY, said I, with a look which implied, *Would you rebel, sir!*

He begged my pardon—*Saw* no objection, indeed!—But might he be allowed once more——

No matter—no matter—I would have shown them to my mother, I said, who, though of no inn of court, knew more of these things than half the lounging lubbers of them; and that at first sight—only that she would have been angry at the confession of our continued correspondence.

But, my dear, let the articles be drawn up, and engrossed; and solemnise upon them; and there's no more to be said.

Let me add that the sailor fellow has been tampering with my Kitty, and offered a bribe, to find where to direct to you. Next time he comes, I will have him laid hold of; and if I can get nothing out of him, will have him drawn through one of our deepest fish-ponds. His attempt to corrupt a servant of mine will justify my orders.

I send this letter away directly. But will follow it by another; which shall have for its subject only my mother, myself, and your uncle Antony. And as your prospects are more promising than they have been, I will endeavour to make you smile upon the occasion. For you will be pleased

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to know that my mother has had a formal tender from that grey goose, which may make her skill in settlements useful to herself, were she to encourage it.

May your prospects be still more and more happy, prays

Your own

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXIII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Saturday, Sunday, May 20, 21.

Now, my dear, for the promised subject. *You must not ask me* how I came by the *originals* [such they really are] that I am going to present you with: for my mother would not read to me those parts of your uncle's letter which bore hard upon myself, and which leave him without any title to mercy from me: nor would she let me hear but what she pleased of hers in answer; for she has condescended to answer him—with a denial, however; but such a denial as no one but an *old bachelor* would take from a widow.

Anybody, except myself, who could have been acquainted with such a fal-lal courtship as this must have been had it proceeded, would have been glad it had gone on: and I dare-say, but for the saucy daughter, it had. My good mamma, in that case, would have been ten years the younger for it, perhaps: and, could I but have approved of it, I should have been considered by her as if ten years older than I am: since, very likely, it would have been: 'We widows, my 'dear, know not how to keep men at a distance—so as to 'give them pain, in order to try their love.—You must ad-'vise me, child: you must teach me to be cruel—yet not *too* 'cruel neither—so as to make a man heartless, who has 'no time, God wot, to throw away.' Then would my behaviour to Mr. Hickman have been better liked; and my mother would have bridled like her daughter.

Oh, my dear, how might we have been diverted by the practisings for the recovery of the *long forgottens!* could I have been sure that it would have been in my power to have

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put them asunder, in the Irish style, *before they had come together.* But there's no trusting to the widow whose goods and chattels are in her own hands, addressed by an old bachelor who has *fine things*, and offers to leave her *ten thousand pounds better* than he found her, and sole mistress, besides, of all her *notables!* for these, as you will see by and by, are his proposals.

The old Triton's address carries the writer's marks upon the very subscription—*To the equally amiable and worthy admired* [there's for you !] *Mrs.* ANNABELLA HOWE, *widow*, the last word added, I suppose, as *Esquire* to a man, as a word of honour; or for fear the *bella* to *Anna*, should not enough distinguish the person meant from the spinster: [vain hussy, you'll call me, I know:] And then follows:—*These humbly present.*—Put down as a memorandum, I presume, to make a leg, and behave handsomely at presenting it, he intending, very probably, to deliver it himself.

And now stand by—to see

Enter OLD NEPTUNE.

His head adorned with sea-weed, and a crown of cockle-shells; as we see him decked out in Mrs. Robinson's ridiculous grotto.

—o—

Monday, May 15.

MADAM,—I did make a sort of resolution ten years ago never to marry. I saw in other families, where they lived *best*, you will be pleased to mark that, *queernesses* I could not away with. Then liked well enough to live single for the sake of my brother's family; and for one child in it more than the rest. But that girl has turned us all off the hinges: and why should I deny myself any comforts for them, as will not thank me for so doing, I don't know.

So much for my motives as from self and family: but the dear Mrs. Howe makes me go further.

I have a very great fortune, I bless God for it, all of my own getting, or most of it; you will be pleased to mark that; for I was the youngest brother of three. You have also,

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God be thanked, a great estate, which you have improved by your own frugality and wise management. Frugality, let me stop to say, is one of the greatest virtues in this mortal life, because it enables us to do justice to *all*, and puts it in our power to benefit *some* by it, as we see they *deserve*.

You have but one child; and I am a bachelor, and have never a one—all bachelors cannot say so: wherefore your daughter may be the better for me, if she will keep up with my humour; which was never thought bad: especially to my equals. Servants, indeed, I don't matter being angry with, when I please; they are paid for bearing it, and too, too often deserve it; as we have frequently taken notice of to one another. And, moreover, if we keep not servants at distance, they will be familiar. I always made it a rule to find fault, whether reasonable or not, that so I might have *no reason* to find fault. Young women and servants in general (as worthy Mr. Solmes observes) are better governed by fear than love. But this my humour as to servants will not affect either you or Miss, you know.

I will make very advantageous settlements; such as any common friend shall judge to be so. But must have all in my own power, while I live: because, you know, Madam, it is as creditable to the wife, as to the husband, that it should be so.

I am not at fine words. We are not children; though it is hoped we may have some; for I am a very healthy, sound man. I bless God for it: and never brought home from my voyages and travels *a worser* constitution than I took out with me. I was none of those, I will assure you. But this I will undertake, that, if you are the survivor, you shall be at the *least* ten thousand pounds the better for me. What, in the contrary case, I shall be the better for you, I leave to you, as you shall think my kindness to you shall deserve.

But one thing, Madam, I shall be glad of, that Miss Howe might not live with us then—[she need not know I write thus]—but go home to Mr. Hickman, as she is upon the

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point of marriage, I hear: and if she behaves dutifully, as she should do, to us both, she shall be the better; for so I said before.

You shall manage all things, both mine and your own; for I know but little of land-matters. All my opposition to you shall be out of love, when I think you take too much upon you for your health.

It will be very pretty for you, I should think, to have a man of experience, in a long winter's evening, to sit down by you, and tell you stories of foreign parts, and the customs of the nations he has consorted with. And I have fine curiosities of the Indian growth, such as ladies love, and some that even my niece Clary, when she was good, never saw. These, one by one, as you are kind to me (which I make no question of, because I shall be kind to you), shall be all yours. Prettier entertainment by much, than sitting with a *too smartish* daughter, sometimes out of humour; and thwarting, and vexing, as daughters will (when women-grown especially, as I have heard you often observe); and thinking their parents old, without paying them the reverence due to years; when, as in your case, I make no sort of doubt they are young enough to wipe their noses. You understand me, Madam.

As for me myself, it will be very happy, and I am delighted with the thinking of it, to have, after a pleasant ride, or so, a lady of like experience with myself to come home to, and but one interest betwixt us: to reckon up our comings-in together; and what this day and this week has produced—Oh, how this will increase love!—most mightily will it increase it!—and I believe I shall never love you enough, or be able to show you all my love.

I hope, Madam, there need not be such maiden niceties and hangings-off, as I may call them, between *us* (for hanging-off sake), as that you will deny me a line or two to this proposal, written down, although you would not answer me so readily when I spoke to you; your daughter being, I suppose, hard by; for you looked round you, as if not willing to be overheard. So I resolved to write:

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that my writing may stand as upon record for my upright meaning; being none of your Lovelaces; you will mark that, Madam; but a downright, true, honest, faithful Englishman. So hope you will not disdain to write a line or two to this my proposal: and I shall look upon it as a great honour, I will assure you, and be proud thereof. What can I say more?—for you are your own mistress, as I am my own master: and you shall *always* be your own mistress, be pleased to mark that; for so a lady of your prudence and experience ought to be.

This is a long letter. But the subject requires it; because I would not write *twice* where *once* would do. So would explain my sense and meaning at one time.

I have had writing in my head *two whole months very near*; but hardly knew how (being unpractised in these matters) to begin to write. And now, good lady, be favourable to

Your most humble lover,

And obedient servant,

ANT. HARLOWE.

HERE'S a letter of courtship, my dear!—and let me subjoin to it, that if now, or hereafter, I should treat this hideous lover, who is so free with me to my mother, with asperity, and you should be disgusted at it, I shall think you don't give me that preference in your love which you have in mine.

And now, which shall I first give you; the answer of my good mamma; or the dialogue that passed between the widow mother and the pert daughter, upon her letting the latter know that she had a love-letter?

I *think* you shall have the *dialogue*. But let me promise one thing; that if you *think* me too free, you must not let it run in your head that I am writing of *your* uncle, or of *my* mother; but of a couple of old lovers, no matter whom. Reverence is too apt to be forgotten by children, where the *reverends* forget *first* what belongs to their own characters. A *grave* remark, and therefore at *your* service, my dear.

Well then, suppose my mamma (after twice coming into

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my closet to me, and as often going out, with very meaning features, and lips ready to burst open, but still closed, as if by compulsion, a speech going off in a slight cough, that never went near the lungs), grown more resolute the third time of entrance, and sitting down by me, thus begin:

Mother. I have a very serious matter to talk with you upon, Nancy, when you are disposed to attend to matters *within* ourselves, and not let matters *without* ourselves wholly engross you.

A good *selve—ish* speech!—But I thought that friendship, gratitude, and humanity, were matters that ought to be deemed of the most *intimate* concern to us. But not to dwell upon words.

Daughter. I am *now* disposed to attend to everything my mamma is *disposed* to say to me.

M. Why then, child—why then, my dear—[and the good lady's face looked *so* plump, *so* smooth, and *so* shining!]—I see you are all attention, Nancy!—But don't be surprised!—don't be uneasy!—But I have—I have—Where is it?—[and yet it lay next her heart, never another near it—so no difficulty to have found it]—I have a *letter,* my dear!—[And out from her bosom it came: but she still held it in her hand.]—I have a *letter,* child.—It is—it is—it is from—from a *gentleman,* I assure you!—[lifting up her head, and smiling.]

There is no delight to a daughter, thought I, in such surprises as seem to be *collecting.* I will deprive my mother of the satisfaction of making a *gradual* discovery.

D. From Mr. Antony Harlowe, I suppose, Madam?

M. [Lips drawn closer: eye raised] Why, my dear!—I cannot but own—but how, I wonder, could you think of Mr. Antony Harlowe?

D. How, Madam, could I think of anybody *else?*

M. How could you think of anybody *else?*—[angry, and drawing back her face]. But do you know the subject, Nancy?

D. You have told it, Madam, by your manner of break-

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ing it to me. But indeed I question not that he had *two* motives in his visits—both equally agreeable to me; for all that family love me dearly.

M. No love lost, if so, between you and them. But this [*rising*] is what I get—so like your papa!—I never could open my heart to *him!*

D. Dear Madam, excuse me. Be so good as to open your heart to *me.*—I don't love the Harlowes—but pray excuse me.

M. You have put me quite out with your forward temper [angrily sitting down again].

D. I will be all patience and attention. May I be allowed to read his letter?

M. I wanted to *advise* with you upon it.—But you are such a strange creature!—you are always for answering one before one speaks!

D. You'll be so good as to forgive me, Madam.—But I thought everybody (he among the rest) knew that you had always declared against a second marriage.

M. And so I have. But then it *was in the mind I was in.* Things may offer——

I stared.

M. Nay, don't be surprised!—I don't intend—I don't intend——

D. Not, perhaps, in *the mind you are in,* Madam.

M. Pert creature! [rising again]——We shall quarrel, I see!—There's no——

D. Once more, dear Madam, I beg your excuse. I will attend in silence.—Pray, Madam, sit down again—pray do [she sat down].—May I see the letter?

No; there are some things in it you won't like.—Your temper is known, I find, to be unhappy. But nothing *bad* against you; intimations, on the contrary, that you shall be the better for him, if you oblige him.

Not a living soul but the Harlowes, I said, thought me ill-tempered: and I was contented that *they* should, who could do as they had done by the most universally acknowledged sweetness in the world.

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Here we broke out a little; but at last she read me some of the passages in the letter. But not the *most mightily* ridiculous; yet I could hardly keep my countenance neither, especially when she came to that passage which mentions his *sound health;* and at which she stopped; she best knew why—But soon resuming:

M. Well now, Nancy, tell me what you think of it.

D. Nay, pray, Madam, tell me what *you* think of it.

M. I expect to be answered by an answer; not by a question! You don't *use* to be so shy to speak your mind.

D. Not when my mamma commands me to do so.

M. Then speak it now.

D. Without hearing the whole of the letter?

M. Speak to what you *have* heard.

D. Why then, Madam——you won't be my mamma HOWE, if you give way to it.

M. I am surprised at your assurance, Nancy!

D. I mean, Madam, you will then be my mamma HARLOWE.

M. Oh, dear heart!—But I am not afool.

And her colour went and came.

D. Dear Madam [but, indeed, I don't love a Harlowe—that's what I mean], I *am* your child, and *must* be your child, do what you will.

M. A very pert one, I am sure, as ever mother bore! And you *must* be my child, do what I *will!*—as much as to say, you would not, if you could help it, if I——

D. How could I have such a thought!—It would be *forward,* indeed, if I had—when I don't know what your *mind* is as to the proposal:—when the proposal is so very advantageous a one too.

M. [Looking a little less discomposed] why, indeed, ten thousand pounds——

D. And to be sure of outliving him, Madam!

This staggered her a little.

M. Sure!—nobody can be sure—but it is very likely that——

D. Not at all, Madam. You was going to read some-

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thing (but stopped) about his constitution: his sobriety is well known—Why, Madam, these gentlemen who have used the sea, and been in different climates, and come home to relax from cares in a temperate one, and are sober—are the likeliest to live long of any men in the world. Don't you see that his very skin is a fortification of buff?

M. Strange creature!

D. God forbid, that anybody I love and honour should *marry a man* in hopes to *bury him*—but suppose, Madam, at your time of life——

M. My time of life?—Dear heart!—What is my time of life, pray?

D. Not old, Madam; and that you are not, may be your danger!

As I hope to live (my dear) my mother smiled, and looked not displeased with me.

M. Why, indeed, child—why, indeed, I must needs say—and then I should choose to do nothing (froward as you are sometimes) to hurt *you.*

D. Why, as to that, Madam, I can't expect that you should deprive yourself of any satisfaction——

M. Satisfaction, my dear!—I don't say it would be a *satisfaction*—but could I do anything that would benefit *you,* it would perhaps be an inducement to hold *one* conference upon the subject.

D. My fortune already will be more considerable than my match, if I am to have Mr. Hickman.

M. Why so?—Mr. Hickman has fortune enough to entitle him to yours.

D. If *you* think so, that's enough.

M. Not but I should think the worse of myself, if I desired anybody's death; but I think, as you say, Mr. Antony Harlowe is a healthy man, and bids fair for a long life.

Bless me, thought I, how shall I do to know whether this be an objection or a recommendation!

D. Will you forgive me, Madam?

M. What would the girl say? [looking as if she was half afraid to hear what.]

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D. Only, that if you marry a man of *his* time of life, you stand two chances instead of one, to be a nurse at *your* time of life.

M. Saucebox!

D. Dear Madam!—What I mean is only that these healthy old men sometimes fall into lingering disorders all at once. And I humbly conceive that the infirmities of age are uneasily borne with, where the remembrance of the pleasanter season comes not in to relieve the healthier of the two.

M. A strange girl!—Yet his healthy constitution an objection just now!—But I always told you that you know either too much to be argued with, or too little for me to have patience with you.

D. I can't but say I should be glad of your commands, Madam, how to behave myself to Mr. Antony Harlowe the next time he comes.

M. How to behave yourself!—Why, if you retire with contempt of him, when he next comes, it will be but as you have been used to do of late.

D. Then he *is* to come again, Madam?

M. And suppose he be.

D. I can't help it, if it be your pleasure, Madam. He desires a line in answer to his fine letter. If he come, it will be in pursuance of that line, I presume?

M. None of your arch and pert leers, girl!—You know I won't bear them. I had a mind to hear what you would say to this matter. I have not written; but I shall presently.

D. It is mighty good of you, Madam (I hope the man will think so), to answer his first application by letter.—Pity *he should write twice, if once will do.*

M. That fetch won't let you into my intention as to what I shall write. It is too saucily put.

D. Perhaps I can guess at your intention, Madam, were it to become me so to do.

M. Perhaps I would not make a *Mr. Hickman* of any man; using him the worst for respecting me.

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D. Nor, perhaps, would I, Madam, if I *liked* his respects.

M. I understand you. But perhaps it is in *your* power to make me hearken, or not, to Mr. Harlowe.

D. Young men, who have probably a good deal of time before them, need not be in haste for a wife. Mr. Hickman, poor man! must stay his time, or take his remedy.

M. He bears more from you than a man ought.

D. Then, I doubt, he gives a reason for the treatment he meets with.

M. Provoking creature!

D. I have but one request to make to you, Madam.

M. A *dutiful* one, I suppose. What is it, pray?

D. That if *you* marry, *I* may be permitted to live single.

M. Perverse creature, I'm sure!

D. How can I expect, Madam, that you should refuse such terms? *Ten thousand pounds!*—At the *least* ten thousand pounds!—A very handsome proposal!—So many *fine things* too, to give you *one by one!*—Dearest Madam, forgive me!—I hope it is not yet so far gone, that rallying *this man* will be thought want of duty to *you.*

M. Your rallying of *him,* and your reverence to *me,* it is plain, have *one* source.

D. I hope not, Madam. But ten thousand pounds——

M. Is no unhandsome proposal.

D. Indeed, I think so. I hope, Madam, you will not be behindhand with him in generosity.

M. He won't be ten thousand pounds the better for me, if he survive me.

D. No, Madam; he can't expect that, as you have a daughter, and as he is a *bachelor, and has not a child!*—Poor old soul!

M. Old soul, Nancy!—And thus to call him for being a bachelor, not having a child!—Does this become you?

D. Not *old soul* for that, Madam—but half the sum; five thousand pounds; you can't engage for less, Madam.

M. That sum has *your* approbation then? [Looking as if she'd be even with me.]

D. As he leaves it to your generosity, Madam, to reward

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his kindness to you, it *can't* be less.—Do, dear Madam, permit me, without incurring your displeasure, to call him *poor old soul* again.

M. Never was such a whimsical creature!—[turning away to hide her involuntary smile, for I believe I looked very archly; at least I intended to do so]—I hate that wicked sly look. You give yourself very free airs—don't you.

D. I snatched her hand, and kissed it—My dear Mamma, be not angry with your girl!—You have told me that *you* was very lively formerly.

M. Formerly! Good lack!—But were I to encourage his proposals, you may be sure, that for Mr. Hickman's sake, as well as yours, I should make a wise agreement.

D. You have both lived to years of prudence, Madam.

M. Yes, I suppose I am an *old soul* too.

D. He also is for making a *wise agreement*, or hinting at one, at least.

M. Well, the short and the long, I suppose, is this: I have not your consent to marry.

D. Indeed, Madam, you have not my *wishes* to marry.

M. Let me tell you that if prudence consists in wishing well to *one's self*, I see not but the *young flirts* are as prudent as the *old souls*.

D. Dear Madam, would you blame me, if to wish you *not* to marry Mr. Antony Harlowe is to wish well to *myself*.

M. You are mighty witty. I wish you were as dutiful.

D. I am more dutiful, I hope, than witty; or I should be a fool as well as a saucebox.

M. Let *me* judge of both—Parents are only to live for their children, let them deserve it or not. That's *their* dutiful notion!

D. Heaven forbid that I should wish, if there be two interests between my mother and me, that my mother postpone her own for mine!—or give up anything that would add to the real comforts of her life to oblige me!—Tell me, my dear mamma, if you think the closing with this proposal *will?*

M. I say that ten thousand pounds is such an acquisition to one's family, that the *offer* of it deserves a civil return.

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D. Not the *offer,* Madam: the *chance* only!—if indeed you have a view to an increase of family, the money may provide——

M. You can't keep within tolerable bounds!—That saucy fleer I cannot away with——

D. Dearest, dearest Madam, forgive me; but *old soul* ran in my head again!—Nay, indeed, and upon my word, I will not be robbed of that charming smile! And again I kissed her hand.

M. Away, bold creature! Nothing can be so provoking as to be made to smile when one would *choose,* and *ought,* to be angry.

D. But, dear Madam, if it be to *be,* I presume you won't think of it before *next winter.*

M. What now would the pert one be at?

D. Because he only proposes to entertain you with pretty stories of foreign nations in a winter's evening.—Dearest, dearest Madam, let me have the reading of his letter through. I will forgive him all he says about *me.*

M. It may be a very difficult thing, perhaps, for a man of the best sense to write a love-letter that may not be cavilled at.

D. That's because lovers in their letters hit not the medium. They either write too much nonsense, or too little. But do you call this *odd* soul's letter [no more will I call him *old* soul, if I can help it] a love-letter?

M. Well, well, I see you are averse to this matter. I am not to be your *mother; you* will live single, if *I* marry. I had a mind to see if generosity govern you in your views. I shall pursue my own inclinations; and if *they* should happen to be suitable to yours, pray let me for the future be better rewarded by you than hitherto I have been.

And away she flung, without staying for a reply.—Vexed, I daresay, that I did not better approve of the proposal—were it only that the merit of denying might have been all her own, and to lay the stronger obligation upon her saucy daughter.

She wrote such a *widow-like* refusal when she went from me, as might not exclude hope in any other wooer; whatever it may do in Mr. Tony Harlowe.

It will be my part, to take care to beat her off the visit she

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half promises to make him (as you will see in her answer) upon condition that he withdraw his suit. For who knows what effect the old bachelor's exotics [*far-fetched and dear-bought* you know is a proverb] might otherwise have upon a woman's mind, wanting nothing but unnecessaries, gewgaws, and fineries, and offered such as are not easily to be met with, or purchased?

Well, but now I give you leave to read here, in this place, the copy of my mother's answer to your uncle's letter. Not one comment will I make upon it. I know my duty better. And here, therefore, taking the liberty to hope that I may, in your present less disagreeable, though not wholly agreeable situation, provoke a smile from you, I conclude myself,

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

Mrs. Annabella Howe to Antony Harlowe, Esq.

Friday, May 19.

MR. ANTONY HARLOWE,

SIR,—It is not usual, I believe, for our sex to answer by pen and ink the first letter on these occasions. The *first* letter! How odd is that! As if I expected another; which I do not. But then I think, as I do not judge proper to encourage your proposal, there is no reason why I should not answer in civility, where so great a civility is intended. Indeed I was always of opinion, that a person was entitled to that, and not to ill usage, because he had a respect for me. And so I have often and often told my daughter.

A woman I think makes but a poor figure in a man's eye afterwards, and does no reputation to her sex neither, when she behaves like a tyrant to him beforehand.

To be sure, sir, if I were to change my condition, I know not a gentleman whose proposal could be more agreeable. Your nephew and your nieces have enough without you: my daughter has a fine fortune without me, and I should take care to double it, living or dying, were I to do such a thing: so nobody need to be the worse for it. But Nancy would not think so.

All the comfort I know of in children, is, that when young

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they do with us what they will, and all is pretty in them to their very faults; and when they are grown up, they think their parents must live for them only; and deny themselves everything for their sakes. I know Nancy could not bear a father-in-law. She would fly at the very thought of my being in earnest to give her one. Not that I stand in fear of my daughter neither. It is not fit I should. But she has her poor papa's spirit. A very violent one that was. And one would not choose, you know, sir, to enter into any affair, that one knows one must renounce a daughter for, or she a mother—except indeed one's heart were *much* in it; which, I bless God, mine is not.

I have now been a widow these ten years; nobody to control me: and I am said not to bear control: so, sir, you and I are best as we are, I believe: nay, I am sure of it: for we want not what either has; having both more than we know what to do with. And I know I could not be in the least accountable for any of my ways.

My daughter, indeed, though she is a fine girl, as girls go (she has too much sense indeed for one of her sex, and knows she has it), is more a check to me than one would wish a daughter to be: for who would choose to be always snapping at each other? But she will soon be married; and then, not living together, we shall only come together when we are pleased, and stay away when we are not; and so, like other lovers, never see anything but the best sides of each other.

I own, for all this, that I love her dearly; and she me, I daresay: so would not wish to provoke her to do otherwise. Besides, the girl is so much regarded everywhere, that having lived so much of my prime a widow, I would not lay myself open to her censures, or even to her indifference, you know.

Your generous proposal requires all this explicitness. I thank you for your good opinion of me. When I know you acquiesce with this my civil refusal [and indeed, sir, I am as much in earnest in it, as if I had spoken broader], I don't know but Nancy and I may, with your permission, come to see your fine things; for I am a great admirer of rarities that come from abroad.

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So, sir, let us only converse occasionally as we meet, as we used to do, without any other view to each other than good wishes: which I hope may not be lessened for this declining. And then I shall always think myself

Your obliged servant,

ANNABELLA HOWE.

P.S. I sent word by Mrs. Lorimer, that I would write an answer: but would take time for consideration. So hope, sir, you won't think it a slight I did not write sooner.

—o—

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday, May 21.

I AM too much disturbed in my mind to think of anything but revenge; or I did intend to give thee an account of Miss Harlowe's observations on the play. *Miss Harlowe's* I say. Thou knowest that I hate the name of *Harlowe;* and I am exceedingly out of humour with her, and with her saucy friend.

What's the matter *now?* thou'lt ask.

Matter enough; for while we were at the play, Dorcas, who had her orders, and a key to her lady's chamber, as well as a master-key to her drawers and mahogany chest, closet key and all, found means to come at some of Miss Howe's last written letters. The vigilant wench was directed to them by seeing her lady take a letter out of her stays, and put it to the others, before she went out with me—afraid, as the women upbraidingly tell me, that I should find it *there.*

Dorcas no sooner found them, than she assembled three ready writers of the *non-apparents;* and *Sally,* and *she,* and *they* employed themselves with the utmost diligence, in making extracts, according to former directions, from these cursed letters, for my use. *Cursed,* I may well call them—Such abuses!—Such virulence!—Oh, this little fury

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Miss Howe!—Well might her saucy friend (who has been equally free with me, or the occasion could not have been given) be so violent as she lately was, at my endeavouring to come at one of these letters.

I was sure that this fair one, at so early an age, with a constitution so firm, health so blooming, eyes so sparkling, expectations therefore so lively, and hope so predominating, could not be absolutely, and from her own vigilance, so guarded, and so apprehensive, as I have found her to be.

Sparkling eyes, Jack, when the poetical tribe have said all they can for them, are an infallible sign of a rogue, or room for a rogue, in the heart.

Thou mayst go on with thy preachments, and Lord M. with his wisdom of nations, I am now more assured of her than ever. And now my revenge is up, and joined with my love, all resistance must fall before it. And most solemnly do I swear that Miss Howe shall *come in for her snack.*

And here, just now, is another letter brought from the same little virulent devil. I hope to procure transcripts from that too, very speedily, if it be put to the test; for the saucy fair one is resolved to go to church this morning; not so much from a spirit of devotion, I have reason to think, as to try whether she can go out without check, control, or my attendance.

I HAVE been denied breakfasting with her. Indeed she was a little displeased with me last night: because, on our return from the play, I obliged her to pass the rest of the night with the women and me, in their parlour, and to stay till near one. She told me at *parting,* that she expected to have the whole next day to herself. I had not read the extracts then; so was all affectionate respect, awe, and distance; for I had resolved to begin a new course, and, if possible, to banish all jealousy and suspicion from her heart: and yet I had no reason to be much troubled at her past suspicions; since, if a woman will continue with a man whom she suspects, when she can get from him, or *thinks* she can, I am sure it is a very hopeful sign.

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SHE is gone. Slipt down before I was aware. She had ordered a chair, on purpose to exclude my personal attendance. But I had taken proper precautions. Will. attended her by consent; Peter, the house-servant, was within Will.'s call.

I had, by Dorcas, represented her danger from Singleton, in order to dissuade her from going at all, unless she allowed me to attend her; but I was answered, with her usual saucy smartness, that if there were no cause of fear of being met with at the playhouse, when there were but *two* playhouses, surely there was less at church, when there were so *many* churches. The chairmen were ordered to carry her to St. James's church.

But she would not be so careless of obliging me, if she knew what I have already come at, and how the women urge me on; for they are continually complaining of *the restraint they lie under* in their behaviour; in their attendance; *neglecting all their concerns in the front house;* and *keeping this elegant back one entirely free from company,* that she may have no suspicion of them. They doubt not my generosity, they say: but *why* for my own sake, in Lord M.'s style, *should I make so long a harvest of so little corn?*

Women, ye reason well. I think I will begin my operations the moment she comes in.

I HAVE come at the letter brought her from Miss Howe to-day. Plot, conjuration, sorcery, witchcraft, all going forward! I shall not be able to see this *Miss Harlowe* with patience. As the nymphs below ask, so do I, Why is night necessary? And Sally and Polly upbraidingly remind me of my first attempts upon themselves. Yet *force* answers not my end—and yet it may, if there be truth in that part of the libertine's creed, *That once subdued, is always subdued!* And what woman answers *affirmatively* to the question?

SHE is returned: but refuses to admit me: and insists upon having the day to herself. Dorcas tells me that she believes her denial is from motives of piety.—Oons, Jack, is

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there impiety in seeing me!—Would it not be the highest act of piety to reclaim me? And is this to be done by her refusing to see me when she is in a devouter frame than usual?—But I hate her, hate her heartily! She is old, ugly, and deformed.—But oh, the blasphemy! yet she is an Harlowe: and I do and can hate her for that.

But since I must not see her [she will be mistress of her *own will*, and of her *time*, truly!] let me fill up *my* time, by telling thee what I have come at.

The first letter the women met with, is dated April 27.* Where can she have put the *preceding* ones!—It mentions Mr. Hickman as a busy fellow between them. Hickman had best take care of himself. She says in it, 'I hope you 'have no cause to repent returning my Norris—it is forth-'coming on demand.' Now, what the devil can this mean! —Her Norris forthcoming on demand!—the devil take me, if I am *out-Norrised!*—If such innocents can allow themthemselves to plot (to *Norris*), well may I.

She is sorry that 'her Hannah can't be with her.'—And what if she could?—What could Hannah do for her in *such a house as this?*

'The women in the house are to be found out in one 'breakfasting.' The women are enraged at both the correspondents for this; and more than ever make a point of my subduing her. I had a good mind to give Miss Howe to them in full property. Say but the word, Jack, and it shall be done.

'She is glad that Miss Harlowe had thoughts of taking 'me at my word. She wondered I did not offer again.' Advises her, if I don't soon, 'not to stay with me.' Cautions her 'to keep me at a distance; not to permit the 'least familiarity.'—See, Jack! see Belford!—Exactly as I thought!—Her vigilance all owing to a cool friend; who can sit down quietly, and give that advice which in her own case she could not take. What an encouragement to me to proceed in my devices, when I have reason to think

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXIX.

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that my beloved's reserves are owing more to Miss Howe's cautions than to her own inclinations! But 'it is my in-'terest to be honest,' Miss Howe tells her.—INTEREST, fools! —I thought these girls knew that my *interest* was ever subservient to my pleasure.

What would I give to come at the copies of the letters to which those of Miss Howe are answers!

The next letter is dated May 3.* In this the little termagant expresses her astonishment, that her mother should write to Miss Harlowe, to forbid her to correspond with her daughter. Mr. Hickman, she says, is of opinion 'that she ought not to obey her mother.' How the creeping fellow trims between both! I am afraid that I must punish him, as well as this virago; and I have a scheme rumbling in my head, that wants but half an hour's musing to bring into form, that will do my business upon both. I cannot bear that the parental authority should be thus despised, thus trampled under foot. But observe the vixen, ''Tis well he 'is of her opinion; for her mother having set her up, she 'must have somebody to quarrel with.'—Could a Lovelace have allowed himself a greater license? This girl's a devilish rake in her heart. Had she been a man, and one of us, she'd have outdone us all in enterprise and spirit.

'She wants but a very little farther provocation,' she says, 'to fly privately to London. And if she does, she will not 'leave her till she sees her either honourably married, or 'quit of the wretch.' Here, Jack, the transcriber Sally has added a prayer—'For the Lord's sake, dear Mr. Love-'lace, get this fury to London!'—Her fate, I can tell thee, Jack, if we had her among us, should not be so long deciding as her friend's. What a gantelope would she run, when I had done with her, among a dozen of her own pitiless sex, whom my charmer shall never see!—But more of this anon.

I find by this letter, that my saucy captive had been drawiug the characters of every varlet of ye. Nor am I spared in it more than you. 'The man's a fool, to be sure, my 'dear.' Let me perish, if they either of them find me one!

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXVII.

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—'A silly fellow, at least.' Cursed contemptible!—'I see 'not but they are a set of infernals!' There's for thee, Belford!—'And he the Beelzebub!' There's for thee, Lovelace! and yet she would have her friend marry a Beelzebub. —And what have any of us done (within the knowledge of Miss Harlowe), that she should give such an account of us, as should excuse so much abuse from Miss Howe!—But the occasion that shall warrant this abuse is to come!

She blames her, for 'not admitting Miss Partington to 'her bed—watchful, as you are, what could have happened? '—If violence were intended, he would not stay for the night.' I am ashamed to have this hinted to me by this virago. Sally writes upon this hint—'See, sir, what is expected 'from you. A hundred, and a hundred times have we 'told you of this.'—And so they have. But to be sure, the advice from *them* was not of half the efficacy as it will be from *Miss Howe*.—'You might have sat up after her, or not 'gone to bed,' proceeds she.

But can there be such apprehensions between them, yet the one advise her to stay, and the other resolve to wait my imperial motion for marriage? I am glad I know that.

She approves of my proposal of Mrs. Fretchville's house. She puts her upon expecting settlements; upon naming a day: and concludes with insisting upon her writing, notwithstanding her mother's prohibitions; or bids her 'take 'the consequence.' Undutiful wretches! How I long to vindicate against them both the insulted parental character!

Thou wilt say to thyself, by this time, and can this proud and insolent girl be the same Miss Howe who sighed for honest Sir George Colmar; and who, but for this her beloved friend, would have followed him in all his broken fortunes, when he was obliged to quit the kingdom?

Yes, she is the *very* same. And I always found in others, as well as in myself, that a first passion thoroughly subdued, made the conqueror of it a rover; the conqueress a tyrant.

Well, but now comes mincing in a letter, from one who has 'the honour of dear Miss Howe's commands' * to ac-

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXIX.

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quaint Miss Harlowe, that Miss Howe is 'excessively con-'cerned for the concern she has given her.'

'I have great temptations, on this occasion,' says the prim Gothamite, 'to express my own resentments upon your pre-'sent state.'

'My own resentments!'——And why did he not fall into this *temptation?*—Why, truly, because he knew not what that state was which gave him so *tempting* a subject— *only by a conjecture,* and so forth.

He then dances in his style, as he does in his gait! To be sure, to be sure, he must have made the grand tour, and come home by the way of Tipperary.

'And being moreover forbid,' says the prancer, 'to enter 'into the cruel subject.'—This prohibition was a mercy to thee, friend Hickman!—But why *cruel subject,* if thou knowest not what it is, but *conjecturest* only from the disturbance it gives to a girl, that is her mother's disturbance, will be thy disturbance, and the disturbance, in turn of everybody with whom she is intimately acquainted, unless I have the humbling of her?

In another letter,* the little fury professes 'that she *will* 'write, and that no *man* shall write for her,' as if some medium of that kind had been proposed. She approves of her fair friend's intention 'to leave me, if she can be received 'by her relations. *I am* a wretch, a foolish wretch. She 'hates me for my teasing ways. She has just made an 'acquaintance with one who knows a vast deal of my private 'history.' A curse upon her, and upon her historiographer! —'The man is really a villain, an execrable one.' Devil take her!—'Had I a dozen lives, I might have forfeited them 'all twenty crimes ago.' An odd way of reckoning, Jack!

Miss Betterton, Miss Lockyer, are named—*the man* (she irreverently repeats) she again calls *a villain.* Let me perish, I repeat, if I am called a villain for nothing!—She 'will have her uncle,' as Miss Harlowe requests, 'sounded 'about receiving her. Dorcas is to be attached to her in-'terest: my letters are to be come at by surprise or trick'—

* See Letter III. of this volume.

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What thinkest thou of this, Jack?

Miss Howe is alarmed at my attempt to come at a letter of hers.

'Were I to come at the knowledge of her freedoms with 'my character,' she says, 'she should be afraid to stir out 'without a guard.' I would advise the vixen to get her guard ready.

'I am at the head of a gang of wretches' [thee, Jack, and thy brother varlets, she owns she means], 'who join 'together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one 'another in their villanies.'—What sayest thou to this, Belford?

'She wonders not at her melancholy reflections for meet-'ing me, for being forced upon me, and tricked by me.'—I hope, Jack, thou'lt have done preaching after this!

But she comforts her, 'that she will be both a warning 'and example to all her sex.' I hope the sex will thank me for this!

The nymphs had not time, they say, to transcribe all that was worthy of my resentment in this letter: so I must find an opportunity to come at it myself. Noble rant, they say it contains—But I am a *seducer*, and a hundred vile fellows, in it.—'And the devil, it seems, took possession of my heart, 'and of the hearts of all her friends, in the same dark hour, 'in order to provoke her to meet me.' Again, 'There is a 'fate in her error,' she says—why then should she grieve?—'Adversity is her shining time,' and I can't tell what; yet never to thank the man to whom she owes the *shine!*

In the next letter,* wicked as I am, 'she fears I must be 'her lord and master.'

I hope so.

She retracts what she said against me in her last.—My behaviour to my Rosebud; Miss Harlowe to take possession of Mrs. Fretchville's house; I to stay at Mrs. Sinclair's; the stake I have in my country; my reversions; my economy; my person; my address [something like in all this!]; are brought in my favour, to induce her now *not* to

* See Letter IX. of this volume.

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leave me. How do I love to puzzle these *long-sighted* girls!

Yet 'my teasing ways,' it seems, 'are intolerable.'—Are women only to tease, I trow? The sex may thank themselves for teaching me to out-tease them. So the headstrong Charles XII. of Sweden taught the Czar Peter to beat him, by continuing a war with the Muscovites against the ancient maxims of his kingdom.

'May eternal vengeance PURSUE the villain [thank 'Heaven, she does not say *overtake*], if he give room to 'doubt his honour!'—Women can't swear, Jack—sweet souls! they can only curse.

I am said *to doubt her love*—Have I not reason? And she, to doubt my ardour—Ardour, Jack!—why, 'tis very right—women, as Miss Howe says, and as every rake knows, love ardours!

She apprises her of the 'ill success of the application 'made to her uncle.'—By Hickman no doubt!—I must have this fellow's ears in my pocket, very quickly, I believe.

She says, 'she is equally shocked and enraged against all 'her family: Mrs. Norton's weight has been tried upon 'Mrs. Harlowe, as well as Mr. Hickman's upon the uncle: 'but never were there,' says the vixen, 'such determined 'brutes in the world. Her uncle concludes her ruined 'already.' Is not that a call upon me, as well as a reproach?—'They all expected applications from her when 'in distress—but were resolved not to stir an inch to save 'her life.' She was 'accused of premeditation and con-'trivance.' Miss Howe 'is concerned,' she tells her, 'for 'the revenge my pride may put me upon taking for the 'distance she has kept me at'—and well she may.—It is now evident to her, that she must be mine (for her *cousin* Morden, it seems, is set against her too)—an act of necessity, of convenience!—thy friend, Jack, to be already made a woman's convenience! Is this to be borne by a Lovelace?

I shall make great use of this letter. From Miss Howe's hints of what passed between her uncle Harlowe and Hickman [it *must* be Hickman], I can give room for my *inven-*

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tion to play; for she tells her, that 'she will not reveal all.' I must endeavour to come at this letter myself. I must have the very words: extracts will not do. This letter, when I have it, must be my compass to steer by.

The fire of friendship then blazes and crackles. I never before imagined that so fervent a friendship could subsist between two sister-beauties, both toasts. But even *here* it may be inflamed by opposition, and by that contradiction which gives vigour to female spirits of a warm and romantic turn.

She raves about 'coming up, if by so doing she could 'prevent so noble a creature from stooping too low, or save 'her from ruin.'—One reed to support another! I think I will contrive to bring her up.

How comes it to pass that I cannot help being pleased with this virago's spirit, though I suffer by it? Had I her but here, I'd engage, in a week's time, to teach her submission without reserve. What pleasure should I have in breaking such a spirit! I should wish for her but for one month, in all, I think. She would be too tame and spiritless for me after that. How sweetly pretty to see the two lovely friends, when humbled and tame, both sitting in the darkest corner of a room, arm-in-arm, weeping and sobbing for each other!—and I their emperor, their then *acknowledged* emperor, reclined at my ease in the same room, uncertain to which I should first, grand signor like, throw out my handkerchief!

Again mind the girl: 'She is enraged at the Harlowes;' she is 'angry at her own mother;' she is 'exasperated 'against her foolish and low-vanity'd Lovelace.' FOOLISH, a little toad! [God forgive me for calling a virtuous girl a toad!]—'Let us stoop to lift the wretch out of his dirt, 'though we soil our fingers in doing it! He has not been 'guilty of direct indecency to you.' It seems *extraordinary* to Miss Howe that I have not.—'Nor dare he!' She should be sure of that. If women have such things in their heads, why should not I in my heart? Not so much of a devil as that comes to neither. Such villainous intentions would

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have shown themselves before now if I had them.—Lord help them!

She then puts her friend upon urging for *settlements, license,* and so forth.—'No room for delicacy now,' she says; and tells her what she shall say, 'to bring all forward 'from me.' Is it not as clear to thee, Jack, as it is to me, that I should have carried my point long ago, but for this vixen?—She *reproaches her for having* MODESTY'D *away,* as she calls it, *more than one opportunity, that she ought not to have slipt.*—Thus thou seest that the noblest of the sex mean nothing in the world by their shyness and distance; but to pound the poor fellow they dislike not, when he comes into their purlieus.

Though 'tricked into this man's power,' she tells her, she is 'not meanly subjugated to it.' There are hopes of my reformation, it seems, 'from my reverence for her; 'since before her I never had any reverence for what was 'good!' I am 'a great, a specious deceiver.' I thank her for this, however. A good moral use, she says, may be made of my 'having prevailed upon her to swerve.' I am glad that any good may flow from my actions.

Annexed to this letter is a paper the most saucy that ever was written of a mother by a daughter. There are in it such free reflections upon widows and bachelors, that I cannot but wonder how Miss Howe came by her learning. Sir George Colmar, I can tell thee, was a greater fool than thy friend, if she had it all for nothing.

The contents of this paper acquaint Miss Harlowe, that her uncle Antony has been making proposals of marriage to her mother.

The old fellow's heart ought to be a tough one, if he succeed; or she who broke that of a much worthier man, the late Mr. Howe, will soon get rid of him.

But be this as it may, the stupid family is made more irreconcilable than ever to their goddess-daughter for old Antony's thoughts of marrying: so I am more secure of her than ever. And yet I believe at last, that my tender heart will be moved in her favour. For I did not *wish* that

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she should have *nothing* but persecution and distress.—— But why loves she the *brutes*, as Miss Howe justly calls them, so much; *me* so little?

I have still more unpardonable transcripts from other letters.

—o—

LETTER XXV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

THE next letter is of such a nature, that I daresay these proud rogues would not have had it fall into my hands for the world.*

I see by it to what her displeasure with me, in relation to my proposals, was owing. They were not summed up, it seems, with the warmth, with the *ardour*, which she had expected.

This whole letter was transcribed by Dorcas, to whose lot it fell. Thou shalt have copies of them all at full length shortly.

'Men of our cast,' this little devil says, 'she fancies, 'cannot have the ardours that honest men have.' Miss Howe has very pretty fancies, Jack. Charming girl! Would to Heaven I knew whether my fair one answers her as freely as she writes! 'Twould vex a man's heart, that this virago should have come honestly by her fancies.

Who knows but I may have half a dozen creatures to get off my hands, before I engage for life?—Yet, lest this should mean me a compliment, as if I would reform, she adds her belief that she 'must not expect me to be honest on this side my grand climacteric.' She has a high opinion of her sex, to think they can charm so long, a man so well acquainted with their *identicalness*.

'He to suggest delays,' she says, 'from a compliment to 'be made to Lord M.!'—Yes, *I*, my dear.—Because a man has not been accustomed to be dutiful, must he never be dutiful?—In so important a case as this too! the hearts of

* See Letter XIV. of this volume.

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his whole family are engaged in it!—'You did, indeed,' says she, 'want an interposing friend—but were I to have been 'in your situation, I would have torn his eyes out, and left 'it to his heart to furnish the reason for it.' See! See! What sayest thou to this, Jack?

'Villain—fellow that he is!' Fellow. And for what? Only for wishing that the next day were to be my happy one; and for being dutiful to my nearest relation.

'It is the cruellest of fates,' she says, 'for a woman to 'be forced to have a man whom her heart despises.'—That is what I wanted to be sure of.—I was afraid that my beloved was too conscious of her talents; of her superiority! I was afraid that she *indeed* despised me.—And I cannot bear to think she does. But, Belford, I do not intend that this lady shall be bound down to so cruel a fate. Let me perish if I marry a woman who has given her most intimate friend reason to say, *she despises me!*—A Lovelace to be *despised*, Jack!

'His clenched fist to his forehead on your leaving him in 'just displeasure'—that is, when she was not satisfied with my ardours, if it please ye!—I remember the motion: but her back was towards me at the time.* Are these watchful ladies all eye?—But observe what follows; 'I wish it had been a pole-axe, and in the hands of his worst enemy.'—

I *will* have patience, Jack; I *will* have patience! *My* day is at hand.—Then will I steel my heart with these remembrances.

But here is a scheme to be thought of, in order to 'get 'my fair prize out of my hands, in case I give her reason 'to suspect me.'

This indeed alarms me. Now the contention becomes arduous. Now wilt thou not wonder, if I let loose my plotting genius upon them both. I will not be *out-Norrised*, Belford.

But once more, 'She has no notion,' she says, 'that I can 'or dare to mean her dishonour. But then the man is a 'fool—that's all.'—I should indeed be a fool, to proceed as

* She tells Miss Howe that she saw this motion in the pier glass. See Letter XIII. of this volume.

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I do, and mean matrimony!—'However, since you are thrown upon a fool,' says she, 'marry the fool at the first 'opportunity; and though I doubt that this man will be the 'most unmanageable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, 'take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward.' —Is there any bearing this, Belford?

But, 'such men as myself, are the men that women do 'not naturally hate.'—True as the gospel, Jack!—The truth is out at last. Have I not always told thee so? Sweet creatures and true Christians these young girls! They love their enemies. But rakes in their hearts all of them! Like turns to like; *that's* the thing. Were I not well assured of the truth of this observation of the vixen, I should have thought it worth while, if not to be a good man, to be more of a hypocrite, than I found it needful to be.

But in the letter I came at to-day, while she was at church, her scheme is further opened; and a cursed one it is. [Mr. Lovelace then transcribes, from his shorthand notes, that part of Miss Howe's letter which relates to the design of engaging Mrs. Townsend (in case of necessity) to give her protection till Colonel Morden come: * and repeats his vows of revenge; especially for these words; 'That should he attempt anything that would make him 'obnoxious to the laws of society, she might have a fair 'riddance of him, either by flight or the gallows, no matter 'which.' He then adds—]

'Tis my pride to subdue girls who know *too much* to *doubt* their knowledge; and to convince them that they know *too little*, to defend themselves from the inconveniences of knowing *too much*.

How passion drives a man on (proceeds he).—I have written a prodigious quantity in a very few hours! Now my resentments are warm, I will see, and perhaps will punish, this proud, this *double*-armed beauty. I have sent to tell her that I must be admitted to sup with her. We have neither of us dined. She refused to drink tea in the afternoon: and I believe neither of us will have much stomach to our supper.

* See Letter XXII. of this volume.

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LETTER XXVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Sunday Morning, seven o'clock.

I WAS at the play last night with Mr. Lovelace and Miss Horton. It is, you know, a deep and most affecting tragedy in the reading. You have my remarks upon it, in the little book you made me write upon the principal acting-plays. You will not wonder that Miss Horton, as well as I, was greatly moved at the representation, when I tell you, and have some pleasure in telling you, that Mr. Lovelace himself was very sensibly touched with some of the most affecting scenes. I mention this in praise of the author's performance; for I take Mr. Lovelace to be one of the most hard-hearted men in the world. Upon my word, my dear, I do.

His behaviour, however, on this occasion, and on our return, was unexceptionable; only that he would oblige me to stay to supper with the women below, when we came back, and to sit up with him and them till near one o'clock this morning. I was resolved to be even with him; and indeed I am not very sorry to have the pretence; for I love to pass the Sundays by myself.

To have the better excuse to avoid his teasing, I am ready dressed to go to church this morning, I will go only to St. James's church, and in a *chair;* that I may be sure I can go out and come in when I please, without being intruded upon by him, as I was twice before.

—o—

Near nine o'clock.

I HAVE your kind letter of yesterday. He knows I have. And I shall expect that he will be inquisitive next time I see him after your opinion of his proposals. I doubted not your approbation of them, and had written an answer on that presumption; which is ready for him. He must *study* for occasions of procrastination, and to disoblige me, if now anything happens to set us at variance again.

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He is very importunate to see me. He has desired to attend me to church. He is angry that I have declined to breakfast with him. I am sure that I should not have been at my own liberty if I had. I bid Dorcas tell him that I desired to have this day to myself. I would see him in the morning as early as he pleased. She says, she knows not what ails him, but that he is out of humour with everybody.

He has sent again in a peremptory manner. He warns me of Singleton. I sent him word, that if *he* was not afraid of Singleton at the playhouse last night, *I* need not at church to-day: so many churches to *one* playhouse. I have accepted of his servant's proposed attendance. But he is quite displeased, it seems. I don't care. I will not be perpetually at his insolent beck.—Adieu, my dear, till I return. The chair waits. He won't stop me, sure, as I go down to it.

I DID not see him as I went down. He is, it seems, excessively out of humour. Dorcas says, not with me neither, she believes: but something has vexed him. This is put on perhaps to make me dine with him. But I will not, if I can help it. I shan't get rid of him for the rest of the day, if I do.

HE was very earnest to dine with me. But I was resolved to carry this one small point; and so denied to dine myself. And indeed I was endeavouring to write to my cousin Morden; and had begun three different times, without being able to please myself.

He was very busy in writing, Dorcas says; and pursued it without dining, because I denied him my company.

He afterwards *demanded*, as I may say, to be admitted to afternoon tea with me: and appealed by Dorcas to his behaviour to me last night; as if, as I sent him word by her, he thought he had a merit in being unexceptionable. However, I repeated my promise to meet him as early as he pleased in the morning, or to breakfast with him.

Dorcas says, he raved: I heard him loud, and I heard his servant fly from him, as I thought. You, my dearest friend,

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say, in one of yours,* that you must have somebody to be angry at, when your mother sets you up. I should be very loth to draw comparisons: but the workings of passion, when indulged, are but too much alike, whether in man or woman.

He has just sent me word that he insists upon supping with me. As we had been in a good train for several days past, I thought it not prudent to break with him for little matters. Yet to be in a manner threatened into his will, I know not how to bear that.

While I was considering, he came up, and tapping at my door, told me, in a very angry tone, he must see me this night. He could not rest till he had been told what he had done to deserve the treatment I gave him.

Treatment I give him! a wretch! Yet perhaps he has nothing new to say to me. I shall be very angry with him.

[As the lady could not know what Mr. Lovelace's designs were, nor the cause of his ill-humour, it will not be improper to pursue the subject from his letter.

Having described his angry manner of demanding, in person, her company at supper, he proceeds as follows:]

'Tis hard, answered the fair perverse, that I am to be so 'little my own mistress. I will meet you in the dining-'room half an hour hence.

'I went down to wait that half hour. All the women 'set me hard to give her cause for this tyranny. They 'demonstrated, as well from the nature of the *sex*, as of the '*case*, that I had nothing to hope for from my tameness, 'and could meet with no worse treatment, were I to be 'guilty of the last offence. They urge me vehemently to '*try* at least what effect some greater familiarities than I 'had ever taken with her would have: and their arguments 'being strengthened by my just resentments on the dis-'coveries I had made, I was resolved to take *some liberties*, 'and, as they were received, to take *still greater*, and lay all

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXVII. paragraph 2.

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'the fault upon her *tyranny*. In this humour I went up, 'and never had paralytic so little command of his joints, as 'I had, while I walked about the dining-room, attending 'her motions.

'With an erect mien she entered, her face averted, her 'lovely bosom swelling, and the more charmingly protu- 'berant for the erectness of her mien. O Jack! that sullen- 'ness and reserve should add to the charms of this haughty 'maid! but in every attitude, in every humour, in every 'gesture, is beauty beautiful. By her averted face, and 'indignant aspect, I saw the dear insolent was disposed to 'be angry—but by the fierceness of mine, as my trembling 'hand seized hers, I soon made fear her predominant passion. 'And yet the moment I beheld her, my heart was das- 'tardised; and my reverence for the virgin purity, so visible 'in her whole deportment, again took place. Surely, Belford, 'this is an angel. And yet, had she not been known to be 'a female, they would not from *babyhood* have dressed her 'as such, nor would she, but upon that conviction, have 'continued the dress.

'Let me ask you, Madam, I beseech you tell me, what I 'have done to deserve this distant treatment?

'And let me ask *you*, Mr. Lovelace, why are my retire- 'ments to be thus invaded?—What can you have to say to 'me since last night, that I went with you so much against 'my will to the play? and after sitting up with you, equally 'against my will, till a very late hour?

'*This* I have to say, Madam, that I cannot bear to be 'kept at this distance from you under the same roof.

'*Under the same roof*, sir!—How came you——

'Hear me out, Madam—[letting go her trembling hands, 'and snatching them back again with an eagerness that 'made her start]—I have a thousand things to say, to talk 'of, relating to our present and future prospects; but when I 'want to open my whole soul to you, you are always con- 'triving to keep me at a distance. You make me incon- 'sistent with myself. Your heart is set upon delays. You 'must have views that you will not own. Tell me, Madam,

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'I conjure you to tell me, this moment, without subterfuge 'or reserve, in what light am I to appear to you in future? 'I cannot bear this distance. The suspense you hold me in 'I cannot bear.

'In what light, Mr. Lovelace! [visibly terrified.] In no 'bad light, I hope.—Pray, Mr. Lovelace, do not grasp my 'hands so hard [endeavouring to withdraw them]. Pray 'let me go.—

'You *hate* me, Madam——

'I hate nobody, sir——

'You *hate* me, Madam, repeated I.

'Instigated and resolved, as I came up, I wanted some 'new provocation. The devil indeed, as soon as my angel 'made her appearance, crept out of my heart; but he had 'left the door open, and was no farther off than my elbow.

'You come up in no good temper, I see, Mr. Lovelace.— 'But pray be not violent.—*I have done you no hurt.*—Pray 'be not violent——

'Sweet creature! and I clasped one arm about her, hold- 'ing one hand in my other.—*You have done me no hurt.*—I 'could have devoured her—but restraining myself—You 'have done me the greatest hurt!—In what have I deserved 'the distance you keep me at?—I knew not what to say.

'She struggled to disengage herself.—Pray, Mr. Lovelace, 'let me withdraw. I know not why this is. I know not 'what I have done to offend you. I see you are come with '*a design to quarrel with me.* If you would not terrify me 'by the ill humour you are in, permit me to withdraw. I 'will hear all you have to say another time—to-morrow 'morning, as I sent you word.—But indeed you frighten 'me—I beseech you, if you have any value for me, permit 'me to withdraw.

'Night, *mid*-night, *is* necessary, Belford. Surprise, terror, '*must* be necessary to the ultimate trial of this charming 'creature, say the women below what they will. I could 'not hold my purposes. This was not the first time that I 'had *intended* to try if she could forgive.

'I kissed her hand with a fervour, as if I would have left

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'my lips upon it.—Withdraw, then, dearest, and ever-dear 'creature. Indeed I entered in a very ill humour. I cannot 'bear the distance at which you so causelessly keep me. 'Withdraw, Madam, since it is your will to withdraw; and 'judge me generously; judge me but as I deserve to be 'judged; and let me hope to meet you to-morrow morning 'early in such a temper as becomes our present situation, 'and my future hopes.

'And so saying, I conducted her to the door, and left her 'there. But instead of going down to the women, I went 'into my own chamber, and locked myself in; ashamed of 'being awed by her majestic loveliness, and apprehensive 'virtue, into so great a change of purpose, notwithstanding 'I had such just provocations from the letters of her saucy 'friend, founded on her own representations of facts and 'situations between herself and me.

[The lady (dated Sunday night) thus describes her terrors, and Mr. Lovelace's behaviour, on the occasion.]

On my entering the dining-room, he took my hand in his, in such a humour, as I saw plainly he was resolved to quarrel with me.—*And for what?—What had I done to him?*—I never in my life beheld in anybody such wild, such angry, such impatient airs. I was terrified; and instead of being as angry as I intended to be, I was forced to be all mildness. I can hardly remember what were his first words, I was so frighted. But, *you hate me, Madam! you hate me, Madam!* were some of them—with such a fierceness—I wished myself a thousand miles distant from him. I hate nobody, said I: I thank God I hate nobody.—You terrify me, Mr. Lovelace—let me leave you.—The man, my dear, looked *quite ugly*—I never saw a man look so ugly as passion made him look—*and for what?*—And he so grasped my hands!—fierce creature;—he so grasped my hands! In short, he seemed by his looks, and by his words (once putting his arms about me) to wish me to provoke him. So that I had nothing to do but to beg of him (which I did repeatedly)

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to permit me to withdraw; and to promise to meet him at his own time in the morning.

It was with a very ill grace that he complied, on that condition; and at parting he kissed my hand with such a savageness, that a redness remains upon it still.

Do you not think, my dear, that I have reason to be incensed at him, my situation considered? Am I not under a *necessity*, as it were, of quarrelling with him; at least every other time I see him? No prudery, no coquetry, no tyranny in my heart, or in my behaviour to him, that I know of. No affected procrastination. Aiming at nothing but decorum. He as much concerned, and so he ought to think, as I, to have that observed. Too much in his power: cast upon him by the cruelty of my relations. No other protection to fly to but his. One plain path before us; yet such embarrasses, such difficulties, such subjects for doubt, for cavil, for uneasiness; as fast as one is obviated, another to be introduced, and not by myself—know not how introduced.—What pleasure can I propose to myself in meeting such a wretch?

Perfect for me, my dearest Miss Howe, perfect for me, I beseech you, your kind scheme with Mrs. Townsend; and I will then leave this man.

My temper, I believe, is changed. No wonder if it be. I question whether ever it will be what it was. But I cannot make *him* half so uneasy by the change, as I am *myself*. See you not how, from step to step, he grows upon me?—I tremble to look back upon his encroachments. And now to give me cause to apprehend *more evil from him, than indignation will permit me to express!*—Oh, my dear, perfect your scheme, and let me fly from so strange a wretch?

Yet, to be first an eloper from my friends to him, as the world supposes; and now to be so from him [to *whom* I know not!] how hard to one who ever endeavoured to shun intricate paths! But he must certainly have views in quarrelling with me thus, which he dare not own!—Yet what can they be?—I am terrified but to think of what they may be!

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Let me *but* get from him!—As to my reputation, if I leave him—that is already too much wounded for me now to be careful about anything, but how to act so as that my own heart shall not reproach me. As to the world's censure, I must be content to suffer that—an unhappy composition, however.—What a wreck have my fortunes suffered, to be obliged to throw overboard so many valuables, to preserve, indeed, the *only* valuable!—A composition that once it would have half broken my heart to think there would have been the least danger that I should be obliged to submit to.

You, my dear, could not be a stranger to my most secret failings, although you would not tell me of them. What a pride did I take in the applause of every one!—What a pride even in supposing I had *not* that pride!—Which concealed itself from my unexamining heart under the specious veil of *humility*, doubling the merit to myself by the *supposed*, and indeed *imputed*, gracefulness in the manner of conferring benefits, when I had not a single merit in what I did, vastly overpaid by the pleasure of doing some little good, and impelled, as I may say, by talents given me—for what?—Not to be proud of.

So desirous, in short, to be considered as an *example!* A vanity which my partial admirers put into my head!—And so secure in my own virtue!

I am punished enough, enough mortified, for this my vanity—I hope, *enough*, if it so please the All-gracious inflictor: since now, I verily think, I more despise myself for my presumptuous self-security, as well as vanity, than ever I secretly vaunted myself on my good inclinations: *secretly*, I say, however; for indeed I had not given myself leisure to reflect, till I was thus mortified, how very imperfect I was; nor how much truth there is in what divines tell us, that we sin in our best performances.

But I was very young.—But here let me watch over myself again: for in those four words, *I was very young*, is there not a palliation couched, that were enough to take all efficacy from the discovery and confession?

What strange imperfect beings!—but *self* here, which

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is at the bottom of all we do, and of all we wish, is the grand misleader.

I will not apologise to you, my dear, for these grave reflections. Is it not enough to make the unhappy creature look into herself, and endeavour to detect herself, who, from such a high reputation, left to proud and presumptuous self, should, by one thoughtless step, be brought to the dreadful situation I am in?

Let me, however, look forward: to despond would be to add sin to sin. And whom have I to raise me up, whom to comfort me, if I desert *myself?*—Thou, O Father, who, I hope, hast not yet deserted, hast not yet cursed me!—For I am Thine!—It is fit that mediation should supply the rest.—

I WAS so disgusted with him, as well as frighted by him, that on my return to my chamber, in a fit of passionate despair, I tore almost in two the answer I had written to his proposals.

I will see him in the morning, because I promised I would. But I will go out, and that without him, or any attendant. If he account not tolerably for his sudden change of behaviour, and a proper opportunity offer of a private lodging in some creditable house, I will not any more return to this:—at present I think so.—And there will I either attend the perfecting of your scheme; or, by your epistolary mediation, make my own terms with the wretch; since it is your opinion that I must be his, and cannot help myself: or perhaps take a resolution to throw myself at once into Lady Betty's protection; and this will hinder him from making his insolently threatened visit to Harlowe Place.

[The lady writes again on Monday evening; and gives her friend an account of all that passed between herself and Mr. Lovelace that day; and of her being terrified out of her purpose of going out: but Mr. Lovelace's next letters giving a more ample account of all, hers are omitted.

It is proper, however, to mention, that she re-urges Miss Howe (from the dissatisfaction she has reason for from

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what passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself) to perfect her scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend. She concludes this letter in these words:]

I should say something of your last favour (but a few hours ago received) and of your dialogue with your mother. —Are you not very whimsical, my dear? I have but two things to wish for on this occasion.—The one, that your charming pleasantry had a *better subject* than that you find for it in this dialogue—the other, that my situation were not such as must too often damp that pleasantry in you, and will not permit me to enjoy it, as I used to do. Be, however, happy in yourself, though you cannot in

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Monday Morning, May 22.

No generosity in this lady. None at all. Wouldst thou not have thought, that after I had permitted her to withdraw, primed for mischief as I was, she would meet me next morning early; and that with a smile; making me one of her best courtesies?

I was in the dining-room before six, expecting her. She opened not her door. I went up stairs and down; and hemmed; and called Will.; called Dorcas; threw the doors hard to; but still she opened not her door. Thus till half an hour after eight, fooled I away my time; and then (breakfast ready) I sent Dorcas to request her company.

But I was astonished when (following the wench, as she did at the first invitation) I saw her enter dressed, all but her gloves, and those and her fan in her hand; in the same moment bidding Dorcas direct Will. to get her a chair to the door.

Cruel creature, thought I, to expose me thus to the derision of the women below!

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Going abroad, Madam?

I am, sir.

I looked cursed silly, I am sure. You will breakfast first, I hope, Madam; and a very humble strain; yet with a hundred tender looks in my heart.

Had she given me more notice of her intention, I had perhaps wrought myself up to the frame I was in the day before, and begun my vengeance. And immediately came into my head all the virulence that had been transcribed for me from Miss Howe's letters, and in that letter which I had transcribed myself.

Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.

I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemmed, and was going to speak several times; but I knew not in what key. Who's modest now! thought I. Who's insolent now!—How a tyrant of a woman confounds a bashful man! She was acting Miss Howe, I thought; and I the spiritless Hickman.

At last, I *will* begin, thought I.

She a dish—I a dish.

Sip, her eyes her own; she, like a haughty and imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favour.

Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipped or tasted.

I was—I was—I sipped—(drawing in my breath and the liquor together, though I scalded my mouth with it) I was in hopes, Madam——

Dorcas came in just then.—Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for?

Damned impertinence, thought I, thus to put me out in my speech! And I was forced to wait for the servant's answer to the insolent mistress's question.

William is gone for one, Madam.

This cost me a minute's silence before I could begin again. And then it was with my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes, that I should have been early admitted to——

What weather is it, Dorcas? said she, as regardless of me as if I had not been present.

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A little lowering, Madam—the sun is gone in—it was very fine half an hour ago.

I had no patience. Up I rose. Down went the tea-cup, saucer and all—Confound the weather, the sunshine, and the wench!—Begone for a devil, when I am speaking to your lady, and have so little opportunity given me.

Up rose the saucy-face, half-frighted; and snatched from the window her gloves and fan.

You must not go, Madam!—Seizing her hand—by my soul you must not——

Must not, sir!—But I must—you can curse your maid in my absence, as well as if I were present——Except—except—you intend for *me,* what you direct to *her.*

Dearest creature, you must not go—you must not leave me—Such determined scorn! such contempts!—Questions asked your servant of no meaning but to break in upon me—I cannot bear it!

Detain me not [struggling]. I will not be withheld. I like you not, nor your ways. You sought to quarrel with me yesterday, *for no reason in the world that I can think of, but because I was too obliging.* You are an ungrateful man; and I hate you with my whole heart, Mr. Lovelace!

Do not make me desperate, Madam. Permit me to say that you shall not leave me in this humour. Wherever you go, I will attend you. Had Miss Howe been my friend, I had not been thus treated. It is but too plain to whom my difficulties are owing. I have long observed that every letter you received from *her,* makes an alteration in your behaviour to *me.* She would have *you* treat *me,* as *she* treats Mr. Hickman, I suppose; but neither does that treatment become your admirable temper to offer, nor me to receive.

This startled her. She did not care to have me think hardly of Miss Howe.

But recollecting herself, Miss Howe, said she, is a friend to virtue and to good men. If she like not you, it is because you are not one of those.

Yes, Madam; and therefore to speak of Mr. Hickman

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and myself, as you both, I suppose, think of each, she treats *him* as she would not treat a *Lovelace.*—I challenge you, Madam, to show me but one of the many letters you have received from her where I am mentioned.

Miss Howe is just; Miss Howe is good, replied she. She writes, she speaks, of everybody as they deserve. If you point me out but any one occasion, upon which you have reason to build a merit to yourself, as either just or good, or even generous, I will look out for her letter on that occasion [if such an occasion there be, I have certainly acquainted her with it]; and will engage it shall be in your favour.

Devilish severe! And as indelicate as severe, to put a modish man upon hunting backward after his own merits.

She would have flung from me: I will *not* be detained, Mr. Lovelace. I *will* go out.

Indeed you must not, Madam, in this humour. And I placed myself between her and the door.——And then, fanning, she threw herself into a chair, her sweet face all crimsoned over with passion.

I cast myself at her feet.—Begone, Mr. Lovelace, said she, with a rejecting motion, her fan in her hand; for your own sake leave me!—My soul is above thee, man! with both her hands pushing me from her!—Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee!—Thou hast, in mine, a proud, a too proud heart to contend with!—Leave me, and leave me for ever!—Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!

Her air, her manner, her voice, were bewitchingly noble, though her words were so severe.

Let me worship an angel, said I, no woman. Forgive me, dearest creature!—creature if you be, forgive me!—forgive my inadvertencies!—forgive my inequalities!—pity my infirmities!—Who is equal to my Clarissa?

I trembled between admiration and love; and wrapt my arms about her knees, as she sat. She tried to rise at the moment; but my clasping round her thus ardently, drew her down again; and never was woman more affrighted. But free as my clasping emotion might appear to her appre-

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hensive heart, I had not, at the instant, any thought but what reverence inspired. And till she had actually withdrawn [which I permitted under promise of a speedy return, and on her consent to dismiss the chair] all the motions of my heart were as pure as her own.

She kept not her word. An hour I waited before I sent to claim her promise. She could not possibly see me yet, was her answer. As soon as she could, she would.

Dorcas says she still excessively trembled; and ordered her to give her hartshorn and water.

A strange apprehensive creature! Her terror is too great for the occasion. Evils are often greater in apprehension than in reality. Hast thou never observed, that the terrors of a bird caught, and actually in the hand, bear no comparison to what we might have supposed those terrors would be, were we to have formed a judgment of the same bird by its shyness before it was taken?

Dear creature!—Did she never romp? Did she never, from girlhood to now, hoyden? The *innocent* kinds of freedom taken and allowed on these occasions, would have familiarised her to greater. Sacrilege but to touch the hem of her garment!—Excess of delicacy!—Oh, the consecrated beauty! How can she think to be a wife?

But how do I know till I try, whether she may not by a less alarming treatment be prevailed upon, or whether [*day*, I have done with thee!] she may not *yield to nightly surprises?* This is still the burden of my song, I can marry her when I will. And if I do, after prevailing (whether by *surprise*, or by *reluctant consent*), whom but myself shall I have injured?

It is now eleven o'clock. She will see me as soon as she can, she tells Polly Horton, who made her a tender visit, and to whom she is less reserved than to anybody else. Her emotion, she assures her, was not owing to perverseness, to nicety, to ill humour; but to *weakness of heart*. She has not *strength of mind* sufficient, she says, to enable her to support her condition.

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Yet what a contradiction!—*Weakness of heart*, says she, with *such a strength of will!*—O Belford! she is a lion-hearted lady, in every case where her honour, her punctilio rather, calls for spirit. But I have had reason more than once in her case, to conclude that the passions of the gentle, slower to be moved than those of the quick, are the most flaming, the most irresistible, when raised.—Yet her charming body is not equally organised. The unequal partners pull two ways; and the divinity within her tears her silken frame. But had the same soul informed a masculine body, never would there have been a truer hero.

—o—

Monday, two o'clock.

Not yet visible!—My beloved is not well. What *expectations* had she from my ardent admiration of her!—More rudeness than revenge apprehended. Yet how my soul thirsts for revenge upon both these ladies? I must have recourse to my *master-strokes*. This cursed project of Miss Howe and her Mrs. Townsend (if I cannot contrive to render it abortive) will be always a sword hanging over my head. Upon every little disobligation my beloved will be for taking wing; and the pains I have taken to deprive her of every other refuge or protection, in order to make her absolutely dependent upon me, will be all thrown away. But perhaps I shall find out a smuggler to counterplot Miss Howe.

Thou rememberest the contention between the sun and the north wind, in the fable; which should first make an honest traveller throw off his cloak.

Boreas began first. He puffed away most vehemently; and often made the poor fellow curve and stagger; but with no other effect, than to cause him to wrap his surtout the closer about him.

But when it came to Phœbus's turn, he so played upon the traveller with his beams, that he made him first unbutton, and then throw it quite off:—nor left he, till he obliged him to take to the friendly shade of a spreading beech;

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where, prostrating himself on the thrown-off cloak, he took a comfortable nap.

The victor-god then laughed outright, both at Boreas and the traveller, and pursued his radiant course shining upon, and warming and cherishing a thousand new objects, as he danced along: and at night, when he put up his fiery coursers, he diverted his Thetis with the relation of his pranks in the passed day.

I, in like manner, will discard all my boisterous inventions: and if I can oblige my sweet traveller to throw aside, *but for one moment*, the cloak of her rigid virtue, I shall have nothing to do, but, like the sun, to bless new objects with my rays. But my chosen hours of conversation and repose, after all my peregrinations, will be devoted to my goddess.

And now, Belford, according to my new system, I think this house of Mrs. Fretchville an embarrass upon me. I will get rid of it; for some time at least. Mennell, when I am out, shall come to her, inquiring for me. What for? thou'lt ask. What for—hast thou not heard what has befallen poor Mrs. Fretchville? Then I'll tell thee.

One of her maids, about a week ago, was taken with the small-pox. The rest kept their mistress ignorant of it till Friday; and *then* she came to know it by accident. The greater half of the plagues poor mortals of condition are tormented with, proceed from the servants they take partly for show, partly for use, and with a view to lessen their cares.

This has so terrified the widow, that she is taken with all the symptoms that threaten an attack from that dreadful enemy of fair faces.—So must not think of removing: yet cannot expect that we should be further delayed on her account.

She now wishes, with all her heart, that she had known her own mind, and gone into the country at first when I treated about the house. This evil then had not happened! a cursed cross accident for *us*, too!—Heigh-ho! nothing else,

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I think, in this mortal life! people need not study to bring crosses upon themselves by their petulancies.

So this affair of the house will be over; at least for one while. But then I can fall upon an expedient which will make amends for this disappointment. I must move *slow*, in order to be *sure*. I have a charming contrivance or two in my head, even supposing my beloved should get away, to bring her back again.

But what has become of Lord M. I trow, that he writes not to me, in answer to my invitation? If he would send me such a letter as I could show, it might go a great way towards a perfect reconciliation. I have written to Charlotte about it. He shall soon hear from me, and that in a way he won't like, if he writes not quickly. He has sometimes threatened to disinherit *me*. But if I should renounce *him*, it would be but justice, and would vex him, ten times more than anything he can do will vex me. Then, the settlements unavoidably delayed by his neglect!—How shall I bear such a life of procrastination! I, who, as to my will, and impatience, and so forth, am of the true *lady-make*, and can as little bear control and disappointment as the best of them.

ANOTHER letter from Miss Howe. I suppose it is *that* which she promises in her last to send her relating to the courtship between old Tony the uncle, and Annabella the mother. I should be extremely rejoiced to see it. No more of the smuggler-plot in it, surely. This letter, it seems, she has put in her pocket. But I hope I shall soon find it deposited with the rest.

—•—

Monday Morning.

AT my repeated request she condescended to meet me in the dining-room to afternoon tea, and not before.

She entered with bashfulness, as I thought; in a pretty confusion, for having carried her apprehensions too far. Sullen and slow moved she towards the tea-table.—Dorcas present, busy in tea-cup preparations. I took her reluctant

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hand, and pressed it to my lips—Dearest, loveliest of creatures, why this distance? why this displeasure?—How can you thus torture the faithfullest heart in the world?

She disengaged her hand. Again I would have snatched it.

Be quiet [peevishly withdrawing it]. And down she sat; a gentle palpitation in the beauty of beauties indicating mingled sullenness and resentment; her snowy handkerchief rising and falling, and a sweet flush overspreading her charming cheeks.

For God's sake, Madam!—[And a third time I would have taken her repulsing hand.]

And for the same sake, sir, no more teasing.

Dorcas retired; I drew my chair nearer hers, and with the most respectful tenderness took her hand; and told her that I could not forbear to express my apprehensions (from the distance she was so desirous to keep me at) that if any man in the world was more *indifferent* to her, to use no harsher a word than another, it was the unhappy wretch before her.

She looked steadily upon me for a moment, and with her other hand, not withdrawing that I held, pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket; and by a twinkling motion urged forward a tear or two, which having arisen in each sweet eye, it was plain by that motion she would rather have dissipated: but answered me only with a sigh, and an averted face.

I urged her to speak; to look up at me; to bless me with an eye more favourable.

I had reason, she told me, for my complaint of her indifference. She saw nothing in my mind that was generous. I was not a man to be obliged or favoured. My strange behaviour to her since Saturday night, *for no cause at all that she knew of,* convinced her of this. Whatever hopes she had conceived of me were utterly dissipated: all my ways were disgustful to her.

This cut me to the heart. The guilty, I believe, in every case, less patiently bear the detecting truth, than the innocent do the degrading falsehood.

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I bespoke her patience, while I took the liberty to account for this change on my part.—I re-acknowledged the pride of my heart, which could not bear the thought of that want of preference in the heart of a lady whom I hoped to call mine, which she had always manifested. Marriage, I said, was a state that was not to be entered upon with indifference on either side.

It is insolence, interrupted she, it is a presumption, sir, to expect tokens of value, without resolving to *deserve* them. You have no whining creature before you, Mr. Lovelace, overcome by weak motives, to love where there is no merit. Miss Howe can tell you, sir, that I never loved the *faults* of my friend; nor ever wished her to love me for mine. It was a rule with us not to spare each other. And would a man who has nothing but faults (for pray, sir, what are your virtues?) expect that I should show a value for him? Indeed, if I did, I should not deserve even *his* value; but ought to be despised by him.

Well have you, Madam, kept up to this noble manner of thinking. You are in no danger of being despised for any marks of tenderness or favour shown to the man before you. You have been perhaps, *you'll* think, *laudably* studious of making and taking occasions to declare, that it was far from being owing to your *choice*, that you had any thoughts of me. My whole soul, Madam, in all its errors, in all its wishes, in all its views, had been laid open and naked before you, had I been encouraged by such a share in your confidence and esteem, as would have secured me against your apprehended worst constructions of what I should from time to time have revealed to you, and consulted you upon. For never was there a franker heart; nor a man so ready to accuse himself. [*This, Belford, is true.*] But you know, Madam, how much otherwise it has been between us.—Doubt, distance, reserve, on your part, begat doubt, fear, awe, on mine.—How little confidence! as if we apprehended each other to be a plotter rather than a lover. How have I dreaded every letter that has been brought you from Wilson's!—and with reason: since the last, from which I

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expected so much, on account of the proposals I had made you in writing, has, if I may judge by the effects, and by your denial of seeing me yesterday (though you could go abroad, and in a *chair* too, to avoid my attendance on you), set you against me more than ever.

I was guilty, it seems, of going to church, said the indignant charmer; and without the company of a man, whose choice it would not have been to go, had I not gone —I was guilty of desiring to have the whole Sunday to myself, after I had obliged you, against my will, at a play; and after you had detained me (equally to my dislike) to a very late hour over-night.—These were my faults: for these I was to be punished: I was to be compelled to see you, and to be terrified when I did see you, by the most shocking ill-humour that was ever shown to a creature in my circumstances, and not bound to bear it. You have pretended to find free fault with my father's temper, Mr. Lovelace: but the worst that he ever showed *after* marriage, was not in the least to be compared to what you have shown twenty times *beforehand*.—And what are my prospects with you, at the very best?—My indignation rises against you, Mr. Lovelace, while I speak to you, when I recollect the many instances, equally ungenerous and unpolite, of your behaviour to one whom you have brought into distress—and I can hardly bear you in my sight.

She turned from me, standing up; and lifting up her folded hands, and charming eyes swimming in tears: Oh, my father, said the inimitable creature, you might have spared your heavy curse, had you known how I have been punished ever since my swerving feet led me out of your garden-doors to meet this man!—Then, sinking into her chair, a burst of passionate tears forced their way down her glowing cheeks.

My dearest life [taking her still folded hands in mine], who can bear an invocation so affecting, though so passionate?

And, as I hope to live, my nose tingled, as I once, when a boy, remember it did (and indeed once more very lately)

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just before some tears came into my eyes; and I durst hardly trust my face in view of hers.

What have I done to deserve this impatient exclamation? —Have I, at any time, by word, by deeds, by looks, given you cause to doubt my honour, my reverence, my *adoration*, I may call it, of your virtues? All is owing to misapprehension, I hope, on both sides. Condescend to clear up but your part, as I will mine, and all must speedily be happy.—Would to Heaven I loved that Heaven as I love you! and yet, if I doubted a return in love, let me perish if I should know how to wish you mine!—Give me hope, dearest creature, give me but hope that I am your preferable choice!—Give me but hope that you hate me not: that you do not *despise me*.

O Mr. Lovelace, we have been long enough together to be tired of each other's humours and ways; ways and humours so different, that perhaps you ought to dislike *me*, as much as I do *you*.—I think, I think, that I cannot make an answerable return to the value you profess for me. My temper is utterly ruined. You have given me an ill opinion of all mankind; of yourself in particular: and withal so bad a one of myself, that I shall never be able to look up, having utterly and for ever lost all that self-complacency, and conscious pride, which are so necessary to carry a woman through this life with tolerable satisfaction to herself.

She paused. I was silent. By my soul, thought I, this sweet creature will at last undo me!

She proceeded: What now remains but that you pronounce me free of all obligation to you? and that you hinder me not from pursuing the destiny that shall be allotted me?

Again she paused. I was still silent; meditating whether to renounce all further designs upon her; whether I had not received sufficient evidence of a virtue, and of a greatness of soul that could not be questioned or impeached.

She went on: Propitious to me be your silence, Mr. Lovelace!—Tell me that I am free of all obligation to you. You know I never made *you* promises. You know that

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you are not under any to *me.*—My broken fortunes I matter not——

She was proceeding—My dearest life, said I, I have been all this time, though you fill me with doubts of your favour, busy in the nuptial preparations. I am actually in treaty for equipage.

Equipage, sir!—Trappings, tinsel!—What is equipage; what is life; what is anything; to a creature sunk so low as I am in my own opinion!—Labouring under a father's curse!—Unable to look backward without self-reproach, or forward without terror!—These reflections strengthened by every cross accident!—And what but cross accidents befal me!—All my darling schemes dashed in pieces, all my hopes at an end; deny me not the liberty to refuge myself in some obscure corner, where neither the enemies you have made me, nor the few friends you have left me, may ever hear of the supposed rash-one, till those happy moments are at hand, which shall expiate for all!

I had not a word to say for myself. Such a war in my mind had I never known. Gratitude, and admiration of the excellent creature before me, combating with villainous habit, with resolutions so premeditatedly made, and with views so much gloried in!—A hundred new contrivances in my head, and in my heart, that to be honest, as it is called, must all be given up by a heart delighting in intrigue and difficulty—Miss Howe's virulences endeavoured to be recollected—yet recollection refusing to bring them forward with the requisite efficacy—I had certainly been a lost man, had not Dorcas come seasonably in with a letter.—On the superscription written—*Be pleased, sir, to open it now.*

I retired to the window—opened it—it was from Dorcas herself.—These the contents—'Be pleased to detain my 'lady: a paper of importance to transcribe. I will cough 'when I have done.'

I put the paper in my pocket, and turned to my charmer, less disconcerted, as she, by that time, had also a little recovered herself.—One favour, dearest creature—Let me but know whether Miss Howe approves or disapproves of my

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proposals? I know her to be my enemy. I was intending to account to you for the change of behaviour you accused me of at the beginning of the conversation; but was diverted from it by your vehemence. Indeed, my beloved creature, you were *very* vehement. Do you think it must not be matter of high regret to me, to find my wishes so often delayed and postponed in favour of your predominant view to a reconciliation with relations who will not be reconciled to you?—To this was owing your declining to celebrate our nuptials before we came to town, though you were so atrociously treated by your sister, and your whole family; and though so ardently pressed to celebrate by me—to this was owing the ready offence you took at my four friends; and at the unavailing attempt I made to see a dropt letter; little imagining, from what two such ladies could write to each other, that there could be room for mortal displeasure—to this was owing the week's distance you held me at, till you knew the issue of another application.—But when they had rejected that; when you had sent my cold-received proposals to Miss Howe for her approbation or advice, as indeed I advised; and had honoured me with your company at the play on Saturday night (my whole behaviour unobjectionable to the last hour); must not, Madam, the sudden change in your conduct, the very next morning, astonish and distress me?—and this persisted in with still stronger declarations, after you had received the impatiently expected letter from Miss Howe; must I not conclude that all was owing to her influence; and that some other application or project was meditating, that made it necessary to keep me again at distance till the result were known, and which was to deprive me of you for ever? For was not that your constantly-proposed preliminary?—Well, Madam, might I be wrought up to a half-phrensy by this apprehension; and well might I charge you with hating me.—And now, dearest creature, let me know, I once more ask you, what is Miss Howe's opinion of my proposals?

Were I disposed to debate with you, Mr. Lovelace, I could very easily answer your fine harangue. But at

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present, I shall only say, that your ways have been very unaccountable. You seem to me, if your meanings were always just, to have taken great pains to embarrass them. Whether owing in you to the want of a clear head, or a sound heart, I cannot determine; but it is to the want of one of them, I verily think, that I am to ascribe the greatest part of your strange conduct.

Curse upon the heart of the little devil, said I, who instigates you to think so hardly of the faithfullest heart in the world!

How dare you, sir! And there she stopt; having almost overshot herself; as I designed she should.

How dare I *what*, Madam? And I looked with meaning. How dare I *what?*

Vile man—And do you—And there again she stopt.

Do I *what*, Madam?—And why *vile man?*

How dare you curse *anybody* in my presence?

Oh, the sweet receder! But that was not to go off so with a Lovelace.

Why then, dearest creature, is there *anybody* that instigates you?—If there be, again I curse them, be they whom they will.

She was in a charming pretty passion. And this was the first time that I had the odds in my favour.

Well, Madam, it is just as I thought. And now I know how to account for a temper that I hope is not *natural* to you.

Artful wretch! and is it thus you would entrap me? But know, sir, that I received letters from nobody but Miss Howe. Miss Howe likes some of your ways as little as I do; for I have set everything before her. Yet she is thus far *your* enemy, as she is mine. She thinks I could not refuse your offers; but endeavour to make the best of my lot. And now you have the truth. Would to Heaven you were capable of dealing with equal sincerity!

I *am*, Madam. And here, on my knee, I renew my vows, and my supplication, that you will make me yours. Yours for ever. And let me have cause to bless you and Miss Howe in the same breath.

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To say the truth, Belford, I had before begun to think that the vixen of a girl, who certainly likes not Hickman, was in love with *me.*

Rise, sir, from your too ready knees; and mock me not!

Too ready knees, thought I! Though this humble posture so little affects this proud beauty, she knows not how much I have obtained of others of her sex, nor how often I have been forgiven for the last attempts, by kneeling.

Mock you, Madam! And I arose, and re-urged her for the day. I blamed myself, at the same time, for the invitation I had given to Lord M., as it might subject me to delay from his infirmities: but told her that I would write to him to excuse me, if she had no objection; or to give him the day she would give me, and not wait for him, if he could not come in time.

My day, sir, said she, is never. Be not surprised. A person of politeness judging between us, would not be surprised that I say so. But indeed, Mr. Lovelace [and wept through impatience], you either know not how to treat with a mind of the least degree of delicacy, notwithstanding your birth and education, or you are an ungrateful man; and [after a pause] a *worse* than ungrateful one. But I will retire. I will see you again to-morrow. I cannot before. I think I hate you. You *may* look. Indeed I think I hate you. And if, upon a re-examination of my own heart, I find I do, I would not for the world that matters should go on farther between us.

But I see, I see, she does not *hate* me! How it would mortify my vanity, if I thought there was a woman in the world, much more this, that could *hate* me! 'Tis evident, villain as she thinks me, that I should not be an *odious* villain, if I could but at last in *one* instance cease to be a villain! She could not hold it, determined as she had thought herself, I saw by her eyes, the moment I endeavoured to dissipate her apprehensions, on my *too ready knees,* as she calls them. The moment the rough covering my teasing behaviour has thrown over her affections is quite removed, I doubt not to find all silk and silver at the bottom, all soft, bright and charming.

I was, however, too much vexed, disconcerted, mortified,

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to hinder her from retiring. And yet she had not gone, if Dorcas had not coughed.

The wench came in, as soon as her lady had retired, and gave me the copy she had taken. And what should it be but of the answer the truly admirable creature had intended to give to my written proposals in relation to settlements?

I have but just dipt into this affecting paper. Were I to read it attentively, not a wink should I sleep this night. To-morrow it shall obtain my serious consideration.

—o—

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday Morning, May 23.

THE dear creature desires to be excused seeing me till evening. She is not very well, as Dorcas tells me.

Read here, if thou wilt, the paper transcribed by Dorcas. It is impossible that I should proceed with my projects against this admirable woman, were it not that I am resolved, after a few trials more, if as nobly sustained as those she has passed through, to make her (if she really hate me not) legally mine.

To Mr. Lovelace.

'WHEN a woman is married, that supreme earthly obliga-
'tion requires, that in all instances, where her husband's real
'honour is concerned, she should yield her own will to his.
'But, beforehand, I could be glad, conformably to what I
'have always signified, to have the most explicit assurances,
'that every possible way should be tried to avoid litigation
'with my father. Time and patience will subdue all things.
'My prospects of happiness are extremely contracted. A
'husband's right will be always the same. In my lifetime I
'could wish nothing to be done of this sort. Your circum-
'stances, sir, will not oblige you to extort violently from him
'what is in his hands. All that depends upon *me*, either with
'regard to my person, to my diversions, or to the economy

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'that no married woman, of whatever rank or quality, should 'be above inspecting, shall be done, to prevent a necessity for 'such measures being taken. And if there will be no *neces-* 'sity for them, it is to be hoped that motives *less* excusable 'will not have force—motives which must be founded in a 'littleness of mind, which a woman, who has *not* that little- 'ness of mind, will be under such temptations, as her duty 'will hardly be able at all times to check, to despise her hus- 'band for having; especially in cases where her own family, 'so much a part of herself, and which will have obligations 'upon her (though then but *secondary* ones) from which she 'can never be freed, is intimately concerned.

'This article, then, I urge to your most serious considera- 'tion, as what lies next my heart. I enter not here minutely 'into the fatal misunderstanding between them and you: the 'fault may be in both. But, sir, *yours* was the foundation- 'fault: at least, you gave a too plausible pretence for my 'brother's antipathy to work upon. Condescension was no 'part of your study. You chose to bear the imputations 'laid to your charge, rather than to make it your endeavour 'to obviate them.

'But this may lead into hateful recrimination.—Let it be 'remembered, I will only say, in this place, that, in *their* eye, 'you have robbed them of a daughter they doated upon; and 'that their resentments on this occasion rise but in proportion 'to their love and their disappointment. If they were faulty 'in some of the measures they took, while they themselves 'did not think so, who shall judge for *them?* You, sir, who 'will judge everybody as you please, and will let nobody 'judge you in *your own* particular, must not be *their* judge. '—It may therefore be expected that they will stand out.

'As for *myself*, sir, I must leave it (so seems it to be 'destined) to your justice, to treat me as you shall think I 'deserve: but if your future behaviour to *them* is not 'governed by that harsh sounding implacableness, which 'you charge upon some of *their* tempers, the splendour of 'your family, and the excellent character of *some* of them '(of *all* indeed, unless your own conscience furnishes you

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'with one *only* exception) will, on better consideration, do 'everything with them: for they *may* be overcome; perhaps, 'however, with the more difficulty, as the greatly prosperous 'less bear control and disappointment than others: for I 'will own to you, that I have often in secret lamented that 'their great acquirements have been a snare to them; per-'haps as great a snare as some *other* accidentals have been 'to you; which being less immediately your own gifts, you 'have still less reason than they to value yourself upon them.

'Let me only, on this subject, further observe, that con-'descension is not meanness. There is a glory in yielding, 'that hardly any violent spirit can judge of. My brother, 'perhaps, is no more sensible of *this* than you. But as you 'have talents which he has not (who, however, has, as I 'hope, that regard for morals, the want of which makes one 'of his objections to you), I could wish it may not be owing 'to *you* that your mutual dislikes to each other do not sub-'side! for it is my earnest hope, that in time you may see 'each other without exciting the fears of a wife and a sister 'for the consequence. Not that I should wish you to yield 'in points that truly concerned your honour: no, sir; I 'would be as delicate in such, as you yourself: *more* delicate, 'I will venture to say, because more *uniformly* so. How 'vain, how contemptible, is that pride, which shows itself 'in standing upon diminutive observances; and gives up, 'and makes a jest of, the most important duties!

'This article being considered as I wish, all the rest will 'be easy. Were I to accept of the handsome separate pro-'vision you seem to intend me; added to the considerable 'sums arisen from my grandfather's estate since his death '(more considerable than perhaps you may suppose from 'your offer); I should think it my duty to lay up for the 'family good, and for unforeseen events, out of it; for, as to 'my donations, I would generally confine myself in them to 'the tenth of my income, be it what it would. I aim at no 'glare in what I do of that sort. All I wish for, is the power 'of relieving the lame, the blind, the sick, and the indus-'trious poor, and those whom accident has made so, or sud-

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'den distress reduced. The common or bred beggars I leave 'to others, and to the public provision. They cannot be 'lower: perhaps they wish not to be higher: and, not able 'to do for every one, I aim not at works of supererogation. 'Two hundred pounds a year would do all I wish to do of 'the separate sort: for all above, I would content myself to 'ask you; except, mistrusting your own economy, you 'would give up to my management and keeping, in order 'to provide for future contingencies, a larger portion; for 'which, as your steward, I would regularly account.

'As to clothes, I have particularly two suits, which, hav- 'ing been only in a manner tried on, would answer for any 'present occasion. Jewels I have of my grandmother's 'which want only new-setting: another set I have, which 'on particular days I used to wear. Although these are not 'sent me, I have no doubt, being merely personals, but they 'will, when I send for them in *another name:* till when I 'should not choose to wear any.

'As to your complaints of my diffidences, and the like, I 'appeal to your own heart, if it be possible for you to make 'my case your own for one moment, and to retrospect some 'parts of your behaviour, words, and actions, whether I am 'not rather to be justified than censured: and whether, of 'all men in the world, *avowing what you avow,* you ought 'not to think so. If you do not, let me admonish you, sir, 'from the very great *mismatch* that then must appear to be 'in our minds, never to seek, nor so much as wish, to bring 'about the *most intimate* union of interests between your- 'self and

'CLARISSA HARLOWE.

'*May* 20.'

THE original of this charming paper, as Dorcas tells me, was torn almost in two. In one of her pets, I suppose! What business have the sex, whose principal glory is meekness, and patience, and resignation, to be in a passion, I trow?—Will not she who allows herself such liberties as a maiden, take greater when married?

And a *wife* to be in a passion!—Let me tell the ladies, it

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is an impudent thing, begging their pardon, and as *imprudent* as impudent, for a *wife* to be in a passion, if she mean not eternal separation, or wicked defiance, by it: for is it not rejecting at once all that expostulatory meekness, and gentle reasoning, mingled with sighs as gentle, and graced with bent knees, supplicating hands, and eyes lifted up to your imperial countenance, just running over, that you should make a reconciliation speedy, and as lasting as speedy? Even suppose the husband is in the wrong, will not this being so give the greater force to her expostulation?

Now I think of it, a man *should* be in the wrong now and then, to make his wife shine. Miss Howe tells my charmer that adversity is *her* shining-time. 'Tis a generous thing in a man to make his wife shine at his own expense: to give her leave to triumph over him by patient reasoning: for were he to be *too imperial* to acknowledge his fault *on the spot*, she will find the benefit of her duty and submission *in future*, and in the high opinion he will conceive of her prudence and obligingness—and so, by degrees, she will become her master's master.

But for a wife to come up with kemboed arm, the other hand thrown out, perhaps with a pointing finger—Look ye here, sir!—Take notice!—If *you* are wrong, *I'll* be wrong! —If *you* are in a passion, *I'll* be in a passion!—Rebuff, for rebuff, sir!—If *you* fly, *I'll* tear!—If *you* swear, *I'll* curse! —And the same room, and the same bed, shall not hold us, sir!—For, remember, I am married, sir!—I am a wife, sir! —You can't help yourself, sir!—Your honour, as well as your peace, is in my keeping! And if you like not this treatment, you may have worse, sir!

Ah! Jack! Jack! what man, who has observed these things, either *implied* or *expressed*, in *other* families, would wish to be a husband!

Dorcas found this paper in one of the drawers of her lady's dressing-table. She was reperusing it, as she supposes, when the honest wench carried my message to desire her to favour me at the tea-table; for she saw her pop a paper into the drawer as she came in; and there, on her mistress's going

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to meet me in the dining-room, she found it; and to be this.

But I had better not to have had a copy of it, as far as I know: for, determined as I was before upon my operations, it instantly turned all my resolutions in her favour. Yet I would give something to be convinced that she did not pop it into her drawer before the wench, in order for me to see it; and perhaps (if I were to take notice of it) to discover whether Dorcas, according to Miss Howe's advice, were most *my* friend, or *hers*.

The very suspicion of this will do her no good: for I cannot bear to be *artfully dealt with*. People love to enjoy their own peculiar talents in *monopoly*, as I may say. I am aware that it will strengthen thy arguments against me in her behalf. But I know every tittle thou canst say upon it. Spare therefore thy wambling nonsense, I desire thee; and leave this sweet excellence and me to our fate: that will determine *for* us, as it shall please itself: for as Cowley says,

> An unseen hand makes all our moves:
> And some are great, and some are small;
> Some climb to good, some from good fortune fall:
> Some wise men, and some fools we call:
> Figures, alas! of speech!—For destiny plays us all.

But, after all, I am sorry, *almost* sorry (for how shall I do to be *quite* sorry, when it is not *given* to me to be so?) that I cannot, until I have made further trials, resolve upon wedlock.

I have just read over again this intended answer to my proposals: and how I adore her for it!

But yet; another *yet!*—She has not given it or sent it to me.—It is not therefore *her* answer. It is not written *for* me, though to me.

Nay, she has not *intended* to send it to me: she has even torn it, perhaps with indignation, as thinking it too *good* for me. By this action she absolutely retracts it. Why then does my foolish fondness seek to establish for her the same merit in my heart, as if she avowed it? Pr'ythee, dear Belford, once more leave us to our fate; and do not

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thou interpose with thy nonsense, to weaken a spirit already too squeamish, and strengthen a conscience that has declared itself of her party.

Then again, remember thy recent discoveries, Lovelace! Remember her indifference, attended with all the appearance of contempt and hatred. View her, even *now*, wrapt up in reserve and mystery; meditating plots, as far as thou knowest, against the sovereignty thou hast, by right of conquest, obtained over her. Remember, in short, all thou hast *threatened* to remember against this insolent beauty, who is a rebel to the power she has listed under.

But yet, how dost thou propose to subdue thy sweet enemy!—Abhorred be *force*, be the *necessity* of force, if that can be avoided! There is no triumph in *force*—no conquest over the will—no prevailing by gentle degrees over the gentle passions!—*force* is the devil!

My cursed character, as I have often said, was against me at setting out—yet is she not a *woman?* Cannot I find one yielding or but half yielding moment, if she do not absolutely hate me?

But with what can I tempt her?—RICHES she was born to, and despises, knowing what they are. JEWELS and ornaments, to a mind so much a jewel, and so richly set, her worthy consciousness will not let her value. LOVE—if she be susceptible of love, it seems to be so much under the direction of prudence, that one unguarded moment, I fear, cannot be reasonably hoped for: and so much VIGILANCE, so much apprehensiveness, that her fears are ever aforehand with her dangers. Then her LOVE OF VIRTUE seems to be *principle*, native principle, or, if *not* native, so deeply rooted, that its fibres have struck into her heart, and as she grew up, so blended and twisted themselves with the strings of life, that I doubt there is no separating of the one without cutting the others asunder.

What then can be done to make such a matchless creature get over the first tests, in order to put her to the grand proof, *whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome?*

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Our mother and her nymphs say, I am a perfect Craven, and no Lovelace: and so I think. But this is no simpering, smiling charmer, as I have found others to be, when I have touched upon affecting subjects at a distance; as once or twice I have tried to her, the mother introducing them (to make sex palliate the freedom to sex) when only we three together. She is above the affectation of not seeming to understand you. She shows by her displeasure, and a fierceness not natural to her eye, that she judges of an impure heart by an impure mouth, and darts dead at once even the embryo hopes of an encroaching lover, however distantly insinuated, before the meaning hint can dawn into *double entendre*.

By my faith, Jack, as I sit gazing upon her, my whole soul in my eyes, contemplating her perfections, and thinking, when I have seen her easy and serene, what would be her thoughts did *she* know my heart as well as *I* know it; when I behold her disturbed and jealous, and think of the *justness* of her apprehensions, and that she cannot fear so much as there is *room* for her to fear; my heart often misgives me.

And must, think I, oh, creature so divinely excellent, and so beloved of my soul, those arms, those encircling arms, that would make a monarch happy, be used to repel brutal force; all their strength, unavailingly perhaps, exerted to repel it, and to defend a person so delicately framed? Can violence enter into the heart of a wretch, who might entitle himself to all her willing yet virtuous love, and make the blessings he aspireth after, her *duty* to confer?—Begone, villain purposes! Sink ye all to the hell that could only inspire ye! And I am then ready to throw myself at her feet, to confess my villainous designs, to avow my repentance, and put it out of my power to act unworthily by such an excellence.

How then comes it, that all these compassionate, and as some would call them, *honest* sensibilities go off!—Why, Miss Howe will tell thee: she says, I am the *devil*.—By my conscience, I think he has at present a great share in me.

There's ingenuousness!—How I lay myself open to thee!

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—But seest thou not, that the more I say against myself, the less room there is for thee to take me to task?—O Belford, Belford! I cannot, cannot (at least *at present*) I cannot marry.

Then her family, my bitter enemies—to supple to them, or if I do not, to make her *as* unhappy as she can be from my *attempts*——

Then does she not love them too much, me too little?

She now seems to despise me: Miss Howe declares that she really does despise me. To be *despised by a* WIFE—What a thought is that!—To be *excelled by a* WIFE too, in every part of praiseworthy knowledge!—To *take lessons*, to *take instructions*, from a WIFE!—*More* than despise me, she herself has taken time to consider whether she does not *hate* me:—*I hate you*, Lovelace, *with my whole heart*, said she to me but yesterday! *My soul is above thee, man!—Urge me not to tell thee how sincerely I think my soul above thee!*—How poor indeed was I then, even in my own heart!—So *visible* a superiority, to so proud a spirit as mine!—And *here* from below, from BELOW indeed! from these *women!* I am so goaded on——

Yet 'tis poor too, to think myself a machine in the hands of such wretches.—I am *no* machine.—Lovelace, thou art base to thyself, but to *suppose* thyself a machine.

But having gone thus far, I should be unhappy, if after marriage, in the petulance of ill-humour, I had it to reproach myself that I did not try her to the utmost. And yet I don't know how it is, but this lady, the moment I come into her presence, half assimilates me to her own virtue.—Once or twice (to say nothing of her triumph over me on Sunday night) I was prevailed upon to fluster myself, with an intention to make some advances, which, if obliged to recede, I might lay upon raised spirits: but the instant I beheld her, I was soberised into awe and reverence: and the majesty of her even *visible* purity first damped, and then extinguished, my *double* flame.

What a surprisingly powerful effect, so much and so long in my power *she!* so instigated by some of her own sex, and

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so stimulated by passion *I!*—How can this be accounted for in a Lovelace!

But what a heap of stuff have I written!—How have I been run away with!—By what?—Canst thou say by what?—Oh, thou lurking varletess CONSCIENCE!—Is it thou that hast thus made me of party against myself?—How camest thou in?—In what disguise, thou egregious haunter of my more agreeable hours?—Stand *thou,* with *fate,* but neuter in this controversy; and if I cannot do credit to human nature, and to the female sex, by bringing down such an angel as this to class with and adorn it (for adorn it she does in her very foibles), then I am all yours, and never will resist you more.

Here I arose. I shook myself. The window was open. Away the troublesome bosom visitor, the intruder, is flown.—I see it yet!—I see it yet!—And now it lessens to my aching eye!—And now the cleft air is closed after it, and it is out of sight!—and once more I am

ROBERT LOVELACE.

—o—

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, May 23.

WELL did I, and but just in time conclude to have done with Mrs. Fretchville and the house: for here Mennell has declared that he cannot in conscience and honour go any further.—He would not for the world be accessory to the deceiving of such a lady!—I was a fool to let either you or him see her; for ever *since* ye have both had scruples, which neither would have had, were a *woman* to have been in the question.

Well, I can't help it!

Mennell has, however, though with some reluctance, consented to write me a letter, provided I will allow it to be the last step he shall take in this affair.

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I presumed, I told him, that if I could cause Mrs. Fretchville's *woman* to supply *his* place, he would have no objection to that.

None, he says—*But is it not pity*——

A pitiful fellow! Such a ridiculous kind of pity *his,* as those silly souls have, who would not kill an innocent chicken for the world; but when killed to their hands, are always the most greedy devourers of it.

Now this letter gives the servant the small-pox: and she has given it to her unhappy vapourish lady. Vapourish people are perpetual subjects for diseases to work upon. *Name* but the malady, and it is *theirs* in a moment. *Ever* fitted for inoculation.—The physical tribe's milch-cows.—A vapourish or splenetic patient is a fiddle for the doctors; and they are eternally playing upon it. Sweet music does it make them. All their difficulty, except a case extraordinary happens (as poor Mrs. Fretchville's, who has *realised* her apprehensions), is but to hold their countenance, while their patient is drawing up a bill of indictment against himself;—and when they have heard it, proceed to *punish*—the right word for *prescribe.* Why should they not, when the criminal has confessed his guilt?—And *punish* they generally do with a vengeance.

Yet, silly toads too, now I think of it. For why, when they know they cannot do good, may they not as well endeavour to gratify, as to nauseate, the patient's palate?

Were I a physician, I'd get all the trade to myself: for Malmsey, and Cyprus, and the generous product of the Cape, a little disguised, should be my principal doses: as these would create new spirits, how would the revived patient covet the physic, and adore the doctor!

Give all the paraders of the faculty whom thou knowest this hint.—There could but one inconvenience arise from it. The APOTHECARIES would find their medicines cost them *something:* but the demand for quantities would answer that: since the honest NURSE would be the patient's taster; perpetually requiring repetitions of the last cordial julap.

Well, but to the letter—yet what need of further explana-

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tion after the hints in my former? The widow can't be removed; and that's enough: and Mennell's work is over; and his conscience left to plague him for his own sins, and not another man's: and very possibly plague enough will give him for those.

This letter is directed, *To Robert Lovelace, Esq., or, in his absence, to his lady.* She had refused dining with me, or seeing me: and I was out when it came. She opened it: so is my lady by her own consent, proud and saucy as she is.

I am glad at my heart that it came before we entirely make up. She would else perhaps have concluded it to be *contrived for a delay:* and now, moreover, we can accommodate our old and new quarrels together; and that's contrivance, you know. But how is her dear haughty heart humbled to what it was when I knew her first, that she can apprehend any delays from me; and have nothing to do but to vex at them!

I came in to dinner. She sent me down the letter, desiring my excuse for opening it.—Did it before she was aware. Lady pride, Belford!—recollection, then retrogradation!

I requested to see her upon it that moment.—But she desires to suspend our interview till morning. I will bring her to own, before I have done with her, that she can't see me too often.

My impatience was so great, on an occasion so *unexpected,* that I could not help writing to tell her, 'how much vexed 'I was at the accident: but that it need not delay my happy 'day, as that did not depend upon the house. [*She knew 'that before, she'll think; and so did I.*] And as Mrs. 'Fretchville, by Mr. Mennell, so handsomely expressed her 'concern upon it, and her wishes that it could suit us to 'bear with the unavoidable delay, I hoped that going down 'to The Lawn for two or three of the summer months, 'when I was made the happiest of men, would be favour-'able to all round.'

The dear creature takes this incident to heart, I believe: She has sent word to my repeated request to see her notwithstanding her denial, that she cannot till the morning: it shall be then at six o'clock, if I please!

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To be sure I *do* please!

Can see her but once a day now, Jack!

Did I tell thee that I wrote a letter to my cousin Montague, wondering that I heard not from Lord M. as the subject was so very interesting! In it I acquainted her with the house I was about taking; and with Mrs. Fretchville's vapourish delays.

I was very loth to engage my own family, either man or woman, in this affair; but I must take my measures securely: and already they all think as bad of me as they well can. You observe by my Lord M.'s letter to yourself, that the well-mannered peer is afraid I should play this admirable creature one of my *usual dog's tricks.*

I have received just now an answer from Charlotte.

Charlot i'n't well. A stomach disorder!

No wonder a girl's stomach should plague her. A single woman; that's it. When she has a man to plague, it will have something besides itself to prey upon. Knowest thou not, moreover, that man is the woman's sun; woman is the man's earth?—How dreary, how desolate, the earth, that the sun shines not upon!

Poor Charlotte! But I *heard* she was not well: that encouraged me to write to her; and to express myself a little concerned that she had not, of her own accord, thought of a visit in town to my charmer.

Here follows a copy of her letter. Thou wilt see by it that every little monkey is to catechise *me*. They all depend upon my good-nature.

—o—

M. HALL, *May 22.*

DEAR COUSIN,—We have been in daily hope for a long time, I must call it, of hearing that the happy knot was tied. My lord has been very much out of order: and yet nothing would serve him, but he would himself write an answer to your letter. It was the only opportunity he should ever have, perhaps, to throw in a little good advice to you, with the hope of its being of any signification; and he has been several hours in a day, as his gout would let him, busied

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in it. It wants now only his last revisal. He hopes it will have the greater weight with you, if it appear all in his own handwriting.

Indeed, Mr. Lovelace, his worthy heart is wrapt up in you. I wish you loved yourself but half as well. But I believe too, that if all the family loved you less, you would love yourself more.

His lordship has been very busy, at the times he could not write, in consulting Pritchard about those estates which he proposes to transfer to you on the happy occasion, that he may answer your letter in the most acceptable manner; and show, by effects, how kindly he takes your invitation. I assure you he is mighty proud of it.

As for myself, I am not at all well, and have not been for some weeks past, with my old stomach-disorder. I had certainly else before now have done myself the honour you wonder I have *not* done myself. Lady Betty, who would have accompanied me (for we had laid it all out), has been exceedingly busy in her law affair; her antagonist, who is actually on the spot, having been making proposals for an accommodation. But you may assure yourself, that when our dear relation-elect shall be entered upon the new habitation you tell me of, we will do ourselves the honour of visiting her; and if any delay arises from the dear lady's want of courage (which considering her man, let me tell you, may very well be), we will endeavour to inspire her with it, and be sponsors for you;—for, cousin, I believe you have need to be christened over again before you are entitled to so great a blessing. What think you?

Just now my lord tells me, he will despatch a man on purpose with his letter to-morrow: so I needed not to have written. But now I have, let it go; and by Empson, who sets out directly on his return to town.

My best compliments, and sister's, to the most deserving lady in the world [you will need no other direction to the person meant] conclude me

Your affectionate cousin and servant,

CHARL. MONTAGUE.

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THOU seest how seasonably this letter comes. I hope my lord will write nothing but what I may show to my beloved. I have actually sent her up this letter of Charlotte's, and hope for happy effects from it. R. L.

[The lady, in her next letter, gives Miss Howe an account of what has passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself. She resents his behaviour with her usual dignity. But when she comes to mention Mr. Mennell's letter, she re-urges Miss Howe to perfect her scheme for her deliverance; being resolved to leave him. But, dating again, on his sending up to her Miss Montague's letter, she alters her mind, and desires her to suspend for the present her application to Mrs. Townsend.]

I HAD begun, says she, to suspect all he had said of Mrs. Fretchville and her house; and even Mr. Mennell himself, though so well-appearing a man. But now that I find Mr. Lovelace had apprised his relations of his intention to take it, and had engaged some of the ladies to visit me there, I could hardly forbear blaming myself for censuring him as capable of so vile an imposture. But may he not thank himself for acting so very unaccountably, and taking such needlessly awry steps, as he has done, embarrassing, as I told him, his own meanings, if they were good?

—o—

LETTER XXX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Wednesday, May 24.

[He gives his friend an account of their interview that morning; and of the happy effects of his cousin Montague's letter in his favour. Her reserves, however, he tells him, are not absolutely banished. But this he imputes to form.]

IT is *not* in the power of woman, says he, to be altogether

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sincere on these occasions. But why?—Do they think it so great a disgrace to be found out to be really what they *are?*

I regretted the illness of Mrs. Fretchville; as the intention I had to fix her dear self in the house before the happy knot was tied, would have set her in that independence in *appearance,* as well as *fact,* which was necessary to show to all the world that her choice was free; and as the ladies of my family would have been proud to make their court to her there, while the settlements and our equipages were preparing. But on any other account, there was no great matter in it; since when my happy day was over, we could, with so much convenience, go down to The Lawn, to my Lord M.'s, and to Lady Sarah's or Lady Betty's, in turn; which would give full time to provide ourselves with servants and other accommodations.

How sweetly the charmer listened!

I asked her if she had had the small-pox?

Ten thousand pounds the worse in my estimation, thought I, if she has not; for not one of her charming graces can I dispense with.

'Twas always a doubtful point with her mother and Mrs. Norton, she owned. But although she was not afraid of it, she chose not unnecessarily to rush into places where it was.

Right, thought I—Else, I said, it would not have been amiss for her to see the house before she went into the country; for if *she* liked it not, I was not obliged to have it.

She asked if she might take a copy of Miss Montague's letter?

I said she might keep the letter itself, and send it to Miss Howe, if she pleased; for *that,* I suppose, was her intention.

She bowed her head to me.

There, Jack! I shall have her courtesy to me by and by, I question not. What a-devil had I to do, to terrify the sweet creature by my termagant projects!—Yet it was not amiss, I believe, to make her afraid of me. She *says,* I am an unpolite man. And every polite instance from such a one is deemed a favour.

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Talking of the settlements, I told her I had rather that Pritchard (mentioned by my cousin Charlotte) had not been consulted on this occasion. Pritchard, indeed, was a very honest man; and had been for a generation in the family; and knew the estates, and the condition of them, better than either my Lord or myself: but Pritchard, like other old men, was diffident and slow; and valued himself upon his skill as a draughtsman; and for the sake of that paltry reputation, must have all his forms preserved, were an imperial crown to depend upon his despatch.

I kissed her unrepulsing hand no less than five times during this conversation. Lord, Jack, how my generous heart ran over!—She was quite obliging at parting.—She in a manner asked me *leave* to retire; to reperuse Charlotte's letter.—I think she bent her knees to me; but I won't be sure.—How happy might we have both been long ago, had the dear creature been always as complaisant to me! For I do love respect, and, whether I deserve it or not, always had it, till I knew this proud beauty.

And now, Belford, are we in a train, or the deuce is in it. Every fortified town has its strong and its weak place. I had carried on my attacks against the impregnable parts. I have no doubt but I shall either *shine* or *smuggle* her out of her cloke, since she and Miss Howe have intended to employ a smuggler against *me*.—All we wait for now is my Lord's letter.

But I had like to have *forgot* to tell thee, that we have been not a little alarmed, by some inquiries that have been made after me and my beloved by a man of good appearance; who yesterday procured a tradesman in the neighbourhood to send for Dorcas: of whom he asked several questions relating to us; particularly (as we boarded and lodged in one house) whether we were married?

This has given my beloved great uneasiness. And I could not help observing upon it, to her, *how right a thing it was that we had given out below that we were married.* The inquiry, most probably, I said, was from her brother's quarter; and now perhaps that our marriage was owned,

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we should hear no more of his machinations. The person, it seems, was curious to know the *day* that the ceremony was performed. But Dorcas refused to give him any other particulars than that we *were* married; and she was the more reserved, as he declined to tell her the motives of his inquiry.

—o—

LETTER XXXI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

May 24.

THE devil take this uncle of mine! He has at last sent me a letter which I cannot show, without exposing the head of our family for a fool. A confounded parcel of pop-guns has he let off upon me. I was in hopes he had exhausted his whole stock of this sort in his letter to you.—To keep it back, to delay sending it, till he had recollected all this *farrago* of nonsense—confound his *wisdom of nations*, if so much of it is to be scraped together, in disgrace of itself, to make one egregious simpleton!—But I am glad I am fortified with this piece of flagrant folly, however; since, in all human affairs, the *convenient* and *inconvenient*, the *good* and the *bad*, are so mingled, that there is no having the one without the other.

I have already offered the bill enclosed in it to my beloved; and read to her part of the letter. But she refused the bill: and as I am in cash myself, I shall return it. She seemed very desirous to peruse the whole letter. And when I told her that, were it not for exposing the writer, I would oblige her, she said, it would not be exposing his Lordship to show it to her; and that she always preferred the heart to the head. I knew her meaning; but did not thank her for it.

All that makes for me in it I will transcribe for her—yet hang it, she shall have the letter, and my soul with it, for one consenting kiss.

SHE has got the letter from me without the reward.

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Deuce take me, if I had the courage to propose the condition. A new character this of bashfulness in thy friend. I see *that a truly modest woman may make even a confident man keep his distance.* By my soul, Belford, I believe that nine women in ten, who fall, fall either *from their own vanity* or *levity,* or for want of *circumspection* and *proper reserves.*

I DID intend to take my reward on her returning a letter so favourable to us both. But she sent it to me, sealed up, by Dorcas. I might have thought that there were two or three hints in it, that she would be too nice immediately to appear to. I send it to thee; and here will stop, to give thee time to read it. Return it as soon as thou hast perused it.

—o—

LETTER XXXII.

Lord M. to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Tuesday, May 23.

It is a long lane that has no turning.—Do not despise me for my proverbs—you know I was always fond of them; and if you had been so too, it would have been the better for you, let me tell you. I dare swear, the fine lady you are so likely to be soon happy with, will be far from despising them; for I am told that she writes well, and that all her letters are full of sentences. God convert you! for nobody but He and this lady can.

I have no manner of doubt but that you will marry, as your father and all your ancestors did before you: else you would have had no title to be my heir; nor can your descendants have any title to be yours, unless they are legitimate; that's worth your remembrance, sir!—*No man is always a fool, every man is sometimes.*—But your follies, I hope, are now at an end.

I know you have vowed revenge against this fine lady's family: but no more of that now. You must look upon

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them all as your relations; and forgive and forget. And when they see you make a good husband and a good father [which God send, for all our sakes!], they will wonder at their nonsensical antipathy, and beg your pardon: but while they think you a vile fellow, and a rake, how can they either love you, or excuse their daughter?

And methinks I could wish to give a word of comfort to the lady, who, doubtless, must be under great fears, how she shall be able to hold in such a wild creature as you have hitherto been. I would hint to her, that by strong arguments, and gentle words, she may do anything with you; for though you are apt to be hot, gentle words will cool you, and bring you into the temper that is necessary for your cure.

Would to God, *my* poor lady, your aunt, who is dead and gone, had been a proper patient for the same remedy! God rest her soul! No reflections upon her memory! *Worth is best known by want!* I know *hers* now; and if I had went first, she would by this time have known *mine.*

There is great wisdom in that saying, *God send me a friend, that may tell me of my faults: if not, an enemy, and he will.* Not that I am your enemy; and that you well know. *The more noble any one is, the more humble:* so bear with me, if you would be thought noble.—Am I not your uncle? and I do not design to be better to you than your father could be? Nay, I will be your father too, when the happy day comes; since you desire it: and pray make my compliments to my dear niece; and tell her I wonder much that she has so long deferred your happiness.

Pray let her know as that I will present HER (not *you*) either my Lancashire seat or *The Lawn* in Hertfordshire, and settle upon her a thousand pounds a year penny-rents; to show her that we are not a family to take base advantages: and you may have writings drawn, and settle as you will.—Honest Pritchard has the rent-roll of both these estates; and as he has been a good old servant, I recommend him to your lady's favour. I have already consulted him: he will tell you what is best for you, and most pleasing to me.

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I am still very bad with my gout, but will come in a litter, as soon as the day is fixed; it would be the joy of my heart to join your hands. And let me tell you, if you do not make the best of husbands to so good a young lady, and one who has had so much courage for your sake, I will renounce you; and settle all I can upon her and hers by you, and leave you out of the question.

If anything be wanting for your further security, I am ready to give it; though you know that my word has always been looked upon as my bond. And when the Harlowes know all this, let us see whether they are able to blush, and take shame to themselves.

Lady Sarah and Lady Betty want only to know the day, to make all the country round them blaze, and all their tenants mad. And if any one of mine be sober upon the occasion, Pritchard shall eject him. And on the birth of the first child, if a son, I will do something more for you, and repeat all our rejoicings.

I ought indeed to have written sooner. But I knew that if you thought me long, and were in haste as to your nuptials, you would write and tell me so. But my gout was very troublesome: and I am but a slow writer, you know, at best: for composing is a thing that, though formerly I was very ready at (as my Lord Lexington used to say), yet having left it off a great while, I am not so now. And I choose, on this occasion, to write all out of my own head and memory; and to give you my best advice; for I may never have such an opportunity again. You have had [God mend you!] a strange way of turning your back upon all I have said: this once, I hope, you will be more attentive to the advice I give you for your own good.

I have still another end; nay, two other ends.

The one was, that now you are upon the borders of wedlock, as I may say, and *all your wild oats will be sown*, I would give you some instructions as to your public as well as private behaviour in life; which, intending you so much good as I do, you ought to hear; and perhaps would never have listened to, on any less extraordinary occasion.

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The second is, that your dear lady-elect (who is it seems herself so fine and so sententious a writer) will see by this, that it is not our faults, nor for want of the best advice, that you was not a better man than you have hitherto been.

And now, in few words, for the conduct I would wish you to follow in public, as well as in private, if you would think me worthy of advising.—It shall be short; so be not uneasy.

As to the *private* life: Love your lady as she deserves. *Let your actions praise you.* Be a good husband; and so give the lie to all your enemies; and make them ashamed of their scandals. And let us have pride in saying, that Miss Harlowe has not done either herself or family any discredit by coming among us. Do this; and I, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, will love you for ever.

As to your *public* conduct: This as follows is what I could wish: but I reckon your lady's wisdom will put us both right—no disparagement, sir; since, with all your wit, you have not hitherto shown much wisdom, you know.

Get into parliament as soon as you can: for you have *talons* to make a great figure there. Who so proper to assist in making new holding laws, as those whom no law in being could hold?

Then, for so long as you will give attendance in St. Stephen's chapel—its being called a chapel, I hope, will not *disgust* you: I am sure I have known many a riot there—a speaker has a hard time of it! but we *peers* have more decorum—but what was I going to say?—I must go back.

For so long as you will give your attendance in parliament, for so long will you be out of mischief; out of *private* mischief, at least: and may St. Stephen's fate be yours, if you wilfully do *public* mischief!

When a new election comes, you will have two or three boroughs, you know, to choose out of:—but if you stay till then, I had rather you were for the shire.

You will have interest enough, I am sure; and being so handsome a man, the women will *make* their husbands vote for you.

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I shall long to read your speeches. I expect you will speak, if occasion offer, the very first day. You want no courage, and think highly enough of yourself, and lowly enough of everybody else, to speak on all occasions.

As to the methods of the house, you have spirit enough, I fear, to be too much above them: take care of that.—I don't so much fear your want of good manners. To *men*, you want no decency, if they don't provoke you: as to that, I wish you would only learn to be as patient of contradiction from *others*, as you would have other people to be to *you*.

Although I would not have you to be a courtier; neither would I have you to be a malcontent. I remember (*for I have it down*) what my old friend Archibald Hutcheson said; and it was a very good saying—to Mr. Secretary Craggs, I think it was)—'I look upon an administration as 'entitled to every vote I can with good conscience give it; 'for a House of Commons should not needlessly put drags 'upon the wheels of government: and when I have *not* 'given it my vote, it was with regret: and, for my country's 'sake, I wished with all my heart the measure had been such 'as I could have approved.'

And another saying he had, which was this: 'Neither 'can an opposition, neither can a ministry, be always wrong. 'To be a plumb man therefore with either, is an infallible 'mark, that that man must mean more and worse than he 'will own he does mean.'

Are these sayings bad, sir? are they to be despised?—Well, then, why should I be despised for remembering them, and quoting them, as I love to do? Let me tell you, if you loved my company more than you do, you would not be the worse for it. I may say so without any vanity; since it is *other men's* wisdom, and not *my own*, that I am so fond of.

But to add a word or two more on this occasion; and I may never have such another; for you *must* read this through—*Love honest men, and herd with them, in the house and out of the house;* by whatever names they be dignified or distinguished: *Keep good men company, and you shall be of their number.* But did I, or did I not, write this before?

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—Writing, at so many different times, and such a quantity, one may forget.

You may come in for the title when I am dead and gone —God help me!—So I would have you keep an equilibrium. If once you get the name of being a fine speaker, you may have anything: and, to be sure, you have naturally a great deal of elocution; a tongue that would delude an angel, as the women say—to their sorrow, some of them, poor creatures!—A leading man in the House of Commons is a very important character; because that house has the giving of money: and *money makes the mare to go;* ay, and queens and kings too, sometimes, to go in a manner very different from what they might otherwise choose to go, let me tell you.

However, methinks, I would not have you take a place neither—it will double your value, and your interest, if it be believed that you will not: for, as you will then stand in no man's way, you will have no envy; but pure sterling respect; and both sides will court you.

For your part, you will not want a place, as some others do, to piece up their broken fortunes. If you can now live reputably upon two thousand pounds a year, it will be hard if you cannot hereafter live upon seven or eight—less you will not have, if you oblige me; as now, by marrying so fine a lady, very much you will—and all this, over and above Lady Betty's and Lady Sarah's favours! What, in the name of wonder, could possibly possess the proud Harlowes! —That son, that son of theirs!—But, for his dear sister's sake, I will say no more of him.

I never was offered a place myself: and the only one I would have taken, had I been offered it, was *master of the buckhounds;* for I loved hunting when I was young; and it carries a good sound with it for us who live in the country. Often have I thought of that excellent old adage: *He that eats the king's goose, shall be choked with his feathers.* I wish to the Lord, this was thoroughly considered by place-hunters! it would be better for them, and for their poor families.

I could say a great deal more, and all equally to the pur-

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pose. But really I am tired; and so I doubt are you. And besides, I would reserve something for conversation.

My nieces Montague, and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty, join in compliments to my niece that is to be. If she would choose to have the knot tied among us, pray tell her that we shall see it *securely done:* and we will make all the country ring and blaze for a week together. But so I believe I said before.

If anything further may be needful toward promoting your reciprocal felicity, let me know it; and how you order about the day; and all that. The enclosed bill is very much at your service. 'Tis payable at sight, as whatever else you may have occasion for shall be.

So God bless you both; and make things as convenient to my gout as you can; though, be it whenever it will, I will hobble to you; for I long to see you; and still more to see my niece; and am (in expectation of that happy opportunity)

Your most affectionate Uncle

M.

—o—

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Thursday, May 25.

THOU seest, Belford, how we now drive before the wind. —The dear creature now comes almost at the first word, whenever I desire the honour of her company. I told her last night, that apprehending delay from Pritchard's slowness, I was determined to leave it to my Lord to make his compliments in his own way; and had actually that afternoon put my writings into the hands of a very eminent lawyer, Counsellor Williams, with directions for him to draw up settlements from my own estate, and conformably to those of my mother! which I put into his hands at the same time. It had been, I assured her, no small part of my concern, that her frequent displeasure, and our mutual mis-

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apprehensions, had hindered me from advising with her before on this subject. Indeed, indeed, my dearest life, said I, you have hitherto afforded me but a very thorny courtship.

She was silent. *Kindly* silent. For well know I, that she could have recriminated upon me with a vengeance. But I was willing to see if she were not loth to disoblige me now. I comforted myself, I said, with the hopes that all my difficulties were now over; and that every past disobligation would be buried in oblivion.

Now, Belford, I have actually deposited these writings with Counsellor Williams; and I expect the draughts in a week at farthest. So shall be doubly armed. For if I *attempt*, and *fail*, these will be ready to throw in, to make her have patience with me *till I can try again*.

I have more contrivances still in embryo. I could tell thee of a hundred, and yet hold another hundred in petto, to pop in as I go along, to excite thy surprise, and to keep up thy attention. Nor rave thou at me; but if thou art my friend, think of *Miss Howe's letters*, and of her *smuggling scheme*. All owing to my fair captive's informations and incitements. Am I not a *villain*, a *fool*, a *Beelzebub*, with them already?—Yet no harm done by me, nor so much as attempted?

Everything of this nature, the dear creature answered (with a downcast eye, and a blushing cheek), she left to me.

I proposed my Lord's chapel for the celebration, where we might have the presence of Lady Betty, Lady Sarah, and my two cousins Montague.

She seemed not to favour a public celebration! and waved this subject for the present. I doubted not but she would be as willing as I to decline a public wedding; so I pressed not this matter farther just then.

But patterns I *actually produced;* and a jeweller was to bring us this day several sets of jewels for her choice. But the patterns she would not open. She sighed at the mention of them: the second patterns, she said, that had been offered to her:* and very peremptorily forbid the jeweller's

* See vol. i. Letter XLI.

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coming; as well as declined my offer of causing my mother's to be new-set, at least for the present.

I do assure thee, Belford, I was in earnest in all this. My whole estate is nothing to me, put in competition with her hoped-for favour.

She then told me that she had put into writing her opinion of my general proposals; and there had expressed her mind as to clothes and jewels: but on my strange behaviour to her *(for no cause that she knew of)* on Sunday night, she had torn the paper in two.

I earnestly pressed her to let me be favoured with a sight of this paper, torn as it was. And, after some hesitation, she withdrew, and sent it to me by Dorcas.

I perused it again. It was in a manner new to me, though I had read it so lately: and, by my soul, I could hardly stand it. A hundred admirable creatures I called her to myself. But I charge thee, write not a word to me in her favour, if thou meanest her well; for, if I spare her, it must be all *ex mera motu.*

You may easily suppose, when I was re-admitted to her presence, that I ran over in her praises, and in vows of gratitude and everlasting love. But here's the devil; she still receives all I say with reserve; or if it be not with reserve, she receives it so much *as her due,* that she is not at all raised by it. Some women are undone by praise, by flattery. I myself, a man, am proud of praise. Perhaps thou wilt say that those are most proud of it who least deserve it; as those are of riches and grandeur who are not born to either. I own, that to be superior to these foibles, it requires a soul. Have I not then a soul?—Surely, I have. —Let me then be considered as an exception to the rule.

Now have I foundation to go upon in my terms. My Lord, in the exuberance of his generosity, mentions a thousand pounds a year penny-rents. *This I* know, that were I to marry this lady, he would rather settle upon her all he has a mind to settle, than upon me. He has even threatened, that if I prove not a good husband to her, he will leave all he can at his death from me to her. Yet con-

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siders not that a woman so perfect can never be displeased with her husband but to *his* disgrace: for who will blame *her?*—Another reason why a LOVELACE should not wish to marry a CLARISSA.

But what a pretty fellow of an uncle is this foolish peer, to think of making a wife independent of her emperor, and a rebel of course; yet smarted himself for an error of this kind!

My beloved, in her torn paper, mentions but two hundred pounds a year, for her separate use. I insisted upon her naming a larger sum. She said it might then be three; and I, for fear she should suspect very large offers, named only five; but added the entire disposal of all arrears in her father's hands for the benefit of Mrs. Norton, or whom she pleased.

She said that the good woman would be uneasy if anything more than a competency were done for her. She was for suiting all her dispositions of this kind, she said, *to the usual way of life of the person.* To go beyond it, was but to put the benefited upon projects, or to make them awkward in a new state; when they might shine in that to which they were accustomed. And to put it into so good a mother's power to give her son a beginning in his business at a proper time; yet to leave her something for herself, to set her above want, or above the necessity of taking back from her child what she had been enabled to bestow upon him; would be the height of such a worthy parent's ambition.

Here's prudence! Here's judgment in so young a creature! How do I hate the Harlowes for producing such an angel!—Oh why, why, did she refuse my sincere address to tie the knot before we came to this house!

But yet, what mortifies my pride is, that this exalted creature, if I *were* to marry her, would not be governed in her behaviour to me by love, but by generosity merely, or by blind duty; and had rather live single, than be mine.

I cannot bear this. I would have the woman whom I honour with my name, if ever I confer this honour upon

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any, forego even her *superior duties* for me. I would have her look after me when I go out as far as she can see me, as my Rosebud after her Johnny; and meet me at my return with rapture. I would be the subject of her dreams, as well as of her waking thoughts. I would have her think every moment lost that is not passed with me: sing to me, read to me, play to me when I pleased: no joy so great as in obeying me. When I should be inclined to love, overwhelm me with it; when to be serious or solitary, if apprehensive of intrusion, retiring at a nod; approaching me only if I smiled encouragement: steal into my presence with silence; out of it, if not noticed, on tiptoe. Be a *lady easy* to all my pleasures, and valuing those most who most contributed to them; only sighing in private, that it was not *herself* at the time. Thus of old did the contending wives of the honest patriarchs; each recommending her handmaid to her lord, as she thought it would oblige him, and looking upon the genial product as her own.

The gentle Waller says, *women are born to be controlled.* Gentle as he was, he knew that. A tyrant husband makes a dutiful wife. And why do the sex love rakes, but because they know how to direct their uncertain wills, and manage them?

ANOTHER agreeable conversation. The day of days the subject. As to fixing a particular one, that need not be done, my charmer says, till the settlements are completed. As to marrying at my Lord's chapel, the ladies of my family present, that would be making a public affair of it; and the dear creature observed, with regret, that it seemed to be my lord's intention to make it so.

It could not be imagined, I said, but that his lordship's setting out in a litter, and coming to town, as well as his taste for glare, and the joy he would take to see me married at last, and to her dear self, would give it as much the air of a public marriage as if the ceremony were performed at his own chapel, all the ladies present.

I cannot, said she, endure the thoughts of a public day.

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It will carry with it an air of insult upon my whole family. And for my part, if my lord will not take it amiss [and perhaps he will not, as the motion came not from himself, but from you, Mr. Lovelace], I will very willingly dispense with his lordship's presence; the rather, as dress and appearance then will be unnecessary; for I cannot bear to think of decking my person while my parents are in tears?

How excellent this! Yet do not her parents richly deserve to be in tears?

See, Belford, with so charming a niceness, we might have been a long time ago upon the verge of the state, and yet found a great deal to do, before we entered into it.

All obedience, all resignation—no will but hers. I withdrew, and wrote directly to my lord; and she not disapproving of it, I sent it away. The purport as follows; for I took no copy.

'That I was much obliged to his lordship for his intended 'goodness to me on an occasion the most solemn of my life. 'That the admirable lady, whom he so justly praised, thought 'his lordship's proposals in her favour too high. That she 'chose not to make a public appearance, if, without dis- 'obliging my friends, she could avoid it, till a reconciliation 'with her own could be affected. That although she 'expressed a grateful sense of his lordship's consent to give 'her to me with his own hand; yet, presuming that the 'motive to this kind intention was rather to do her honour, 'than it otherwise would have been his own choice (especi- 'ally as travelling would be at this time so inconvenient 'to him), she thought it advisable to save his lordship 'trouble on this occasion; and hoped he would take as 'meant her declining the favour.

'That The Lawn will be most acceptable to us both to 'retire to: and the rather, as it is to his lordship.

'But, if he pleases, the jointure may be made from my 'own estate; leaving to his lordship's goodness the alter- 'native.'

I conclude with telling him, 'that I had offered to present 'the lady his lordship's bill; but on her declining to accept

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'of it (having myself no present occasion for it) I return it 'enclosed, with my thanks, &c.'

And is not this going a plaguy length? What a figure should I make in rakish annals, if at last I should be caught in my own gin?

The sex may say what they will, but a poor innocent fellow had need to take great care of himself, when he dances upon the edge of the matrimonial precipice. Many a faint-hearted man, when he began in jest, or only designed to ape gallantry, has been forced into earnest, by being over-prompt, and taken at his word, not knowing how to own that he meant less than the lady supposed he meant. I am the better enabled to judge that this must have been the case of many a sneaking varlet; because I, who know the female world as well as any man in it of my standing, am so frequently in doubt of myself, and know not what to make of the matter.

Then these little sly rogues, how they lie couchant, ready to spring upon us harmless fellows the moment we are in their reach!—When the ice is once broken for them, how swiftly can they make to port!—Meantime, the subject they can least *speak* to, they most *think* of. Nor can you talk of the ceremony, before they have laid out in their minds how it is all to be. Little saucy-face designers! how first they draw themselves in, then us!

But be all these things as they will, Lord M. never in his life received so handsome a letter as this from his nephew

LOVELACE.

[The lady, after having given to Miss Howe the particulars contained in Mr. Lovelace's last letter, thus expresses herself:]

A principal consolation arising from these favourable appearances is, that I, who have now but one only friend, shall most probably, and if it be not my own fault, have as many new ones as there are persons in Mr. Lovelace's family; and this whether Mr. Lovelace treat me kindly or not. And who knows but that, by degrees, those new

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friends, by their rank and merit, may have weight enough to get me restored to the favour of my relations? till which can be effected, I shall not be tolerably easy. Happy I never expect to be. Mr. Lovelace's mind and mine are vastly different; different in *essentials*.

But as matters are at present circumstanced, I pray you, my dear friend, to keep to yourself everything that might bring discredit to him, if revealed. Better anybody expose a man than a wife, if I *am* to be his; and what is said by you will be thought to come from me.

It shall be my constant prayer, that all the felicities which this world can afford may be yours: and that the Almighty will never suffer you nor yours, to the remotest posterity, to want such a friend as my Anna Howe has been to

Her

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

AND now that my beloved seems secure in my net, for my project upon the vixen Miss Howe, and upon her mother: in which the officious prancer Hickman is to come in for a dash.

But why upon her mother, methinks thou askest, who, unknown to herself, has only acted, by thy impulse, through thy agent Joseph Leman, upon the folly of old Tony the uncle?

No matter for that: she believes she acts upon her own judgment; and deserves to be punished for pretending to judgment, when she has none.—Every living soul but myself, I can tell thee, shall be punished, that treats either cruelly or disrespectfully so adored a lady.—What a plague! is it not enough that she is teased and tormented in person by me?

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I have already broken the matter to our three confederates; as a *supposed*, not a *resolved-on* case indeed. And yet they know that with me, in a piece of mischief, execution, with its swiftest feet, is seldom three paces behind projection, which hardly ever limps neither.

MOWBRAY is not against it. It is a scheme, he says, worthy of us: and we have not done anything for a good while that has made a noise.

BELTON, indeed, hesitates a little, because matters go wrong between him and his Thomasine; and the poor fellow has not the courage to have his sore place probed to the bottom.

TOURVILLE has started a fresh game, shrugs his shoulders, and should not *choose* to go abroad at present, *if I please*. For I apprehend that (from the *nature* of the project) there will be a kind of necessity to travel, till all is blown over.

TO ME, one country is as good as another; and I shall soon, I suppose, choose to quit this paltry island; except the mistress of my fate will consent to cohabit at *home;* and so lay me under no necessity of *surprising her into foreign parts*. TRAVELLING, thou knowest, gives the sexes charming opportunities of being familiar with one another. A very few days and nights must now decide all matters betwixt me and my fair inimitable.

DOLEMAN, who can act in these causes only as chamber-counsel, will inform us by pen and ink [his right hand and right side having not yet been struck, and the other side beginning to be sensible] of all that shall occur in our absence.

As for THEE, we had rather have thy company than not; for although thou art a wretched fellow at contrivance, yet art thou intrepid at execution. But as thy present engagements make thy attendance uncertain, I am not for making thy part necessary to our scheme; but for leaving thee to come after us when abroad. I know thou canst not long live without us.

The project, in short, is this:—Mrs. Howe has an elder sister in the Isle of Wight, who is lately a widow; and I

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am well informed that the mother and daughter have engaged, before the latter is married, to pay a visit to this lady, who is rich, and intends Miss for her heiress; and in the interim will make her some valuable presents on her approaching nuptials; which, as Mrs. Howe, who loves money more than anything but herself, told one of my acquaintance, would be *worth fetching.*

Now, Jack, nothing more need be done than to hire a little trim vessel, which shall sail a pleasuring backward and forward to Portsmouth, Spithead, and the Isle of Wight for a week or fortnight before we enter upon our parts of the plot. And as Mrs. Howe will be for making the best bargain she can for her passage, the master of the vessel may have orders (as a perquisite allowed him by his owners) to take what she will give: and the master's name, be it what it will, shall be *Ganmore* on the occasion; for I know a rogue of that name, who is not obliged to be of any country, any more than we.

Well, then, we will imagine them on board. I will be there in disguise. They know not any of ye four—supposing (the scheme so inviting) that thou canst be one.

'Tis plaguy hard, if he cannot *find,* or *make* a storm.

Perhaps they will be sea-sick: but whether they be or not, no doubt they will keep their cabin.

Here will be Mrs. Howe, Miss Howe, Mr. Hickman, a maid, and a footman, I suppose; and thus we will order it.

I know it will be hard weather: I *know* it will: and before there can be the least suspicion of the matter, we shall be in sight of Guernsey, Jersey, Dieppe, Cherbourg, or anywhere on the French coast that it shall please us to agree with the winds to blow us: and then, securing the footman, and the women being separated, one of us, according to lots that may be cast, shall overcome, either by persuasion or force, the maid-servant: that will be no hard task; and she is a likely wench [I have seen her often]: one, Mrs. Howe; nor can there be much difficulty there; for she is full of health and life, and has been long a widow: another [*that,* says the princely lion, must be *I!*]

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the saucy daughter; who will be too much frighted to make great resistance [*violent* spirits, in that sex, are seldom *true* spirits—'tis but where they *can*] and after beating about the coast for three or four days for recreation's sake, and to make sure work, and till we see our sullen birds begin to eat and sip, we will set them all ashore where it will be most convenient; sell the vessel [to Mrs. Townsend's agents, with all my heart, or to some other smuggler], or give it to Ganmore; and pursue our travels, and tarry abroad till all is hushed up.

Now I know thou wilt make difficulties, as it is thy way; while it is mine to conquer them. My other vassals made theirs; and I condescended to obviate them: as thus I will thine, first stating them for thee according to what I know of thy phlegm.

What, in the first place, wilt thou ask, shall be done with Hickman? who will be in full parade of dress and primness, in order to show the old aunt what a devilish clever fellow of a nephew she is to have.

What!—I'll tell thee—Hickman, in good manners, will leave the women in their cabin—and, to show his courage with his breeding, be upon deck.

Well, and suppose he is?

Suppose he is!—Why then I hope it is easy for Ganmore, or anybody else, myself suppose in my pea-jacket and great watch coat (if any other make a scruple to do it), while he stands in the way, gaping and staring like a novice, to stumble against him, and push him overboard!—A rich thought—is it not, Belford?—He is certainly plaguy officious in the ladies' correspondence; and, I am informed, plays double between mother and daughter, in fear of both.—Dost not see him, Jack?—I do—popping up and down, his wig and hat floating by him; and paddling, pawing, and dashing, like a frighted mongrel—I am afraid he never ventured to learn to swim.

But thou wilt not drown the poor fellow; wilt thou?

No, no!—that is not necessary to the project—I hate to do mischiefs supererogatory. The skiff shall be ready to save

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him, while the vessel keeps its course: he shall be set on shore with the loss of wig and hat only, and of half of his little wits, at the place where he embarked, or anywhere else.

Well, but shall we not be in danger of being hanged for three such enormous rapes, although Hickman should escape with only a bellyful of sea water?

Yes, to be sure, when caught.—But is there any likelihood of that?—Besides, have we not been in danger before now for worse facts? and what is there in being only in *danger?* —If we actually were to appear in open day in England before matters are made up, there will be greater likelihood that these women will not prosecute than that they *will.*— For my own part, I should wish they *may.* Would not a brave fellow choose to appear in court to such an arraignment, confronting women who would do credit to his attempt? The country is more merciful in *these* cases than in *any others:* I should therefore like to put myself upon my country.

Let me indulge a few reflections upon what thou mayest think the *worst* that *can* happen. I will suppose that thou art one of us; and that all five are actually brought to trial on this occasion: how bravely shall we enter a court, *I* at the head of you, dressed out each man, as if to his wedding appearance!—You are sure of all the women, old and young, of your side.—What brave fellows!—what fine gentlemen! —There goes a charming handsome man!—meaning me, to be sure!—who could find in their hearts to hang such a gentleman as that? whispers one lady, sitting perhaps on the right hand of the recorder [I suppose the scene to be in London]: while another disbelieves that any woman could *fairly* swear against me. All will crowd after *me:* it will be each man's happiness (if ye shall chance to be bashful) to be neglected: I shall be found to be the greatest criminal; and my safety, for which the general voice will be engaged, will be yours.

But then comes the triumph of triumphs, that will make the accused look up, while the accusers are covered with confusion.

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Make room there!—stand by!—give back!—One receiving a rap, another an elbow, half a score a push a-piece!—

Enter the slow-moving, hooded-faced, down-looking plaintiffs.—

And first the widow, with a sorrowful countenance, though half-veiled, pitying her daughter more than herself. The people, the women especially, who on this occasion will be five-sixths of the spectators, reproaching her.—You'd have the conscience, would you, to have five such brave gentlemen as these hanged for you know not what?

Next comes the poor maid—who, perhaps, has been ravished twenty times before; and had not appeared now, but for company sake; mincing, simpering, weeping, by turns; not knowing whether she should be sorry or glad.

But every eye dwells upon Miss!—See, see, the handsome gentleman bows to her!

To the very ground, to be sure, I shall bow; and kiss my hand.

See her confusion! see! she turns from him!—Ay! that's because it is in open court, cries an arch one!—While others admire her.—Ay! that's a girl worth venturing one's neck for!

Then we shall be praised—even the judges, and the whole crowded bench, will acquit us in their hearts! and every single man wish he had been me!—the women, all the time, disclaiming prosecution, were the case to be their own. To be sure, Belford, the sufferers cannot put half so good a face upon the matter as we.

Then what a noise will this matter make!—Is it not enough, suppose us moving from the prison to the sessions-house,* to make a noble heart thump it away most gloriously, when such a one finds himself attended to his trial by a parade of guards and officers, of miens and aspects warlike and unwarlike; himself their whole care, and their business!

* Within these few years past, a passage has been made from the prison to the sessions-house, whereby malefactors are carried into court without going through the street. Lovelace's triumph on their supposed march shows the wisdom of this alteration.

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weapons in their hands, some bright, some rusty, equally venerable for their antiquity and inoffensiveness! others of more authoritative demeanour, strutting before with fine painted staves! shoals of people following, with a Which is he whom the *young* lady appears against?—Then, let us look down, look up, look round, which way we will, we shall see all the doors, the shops, the windows, the sign-irons, and balconies (garrets, gutters, and chimney-tops included), all white-capped, black-hooded, and periwigged, or crop-eared up by the *immobile vulgus:* while the floating *street-swarmers,* who have seen us pass by at one place, run with stretched-out necks, and strained eyeballs, a round-about way, and elbow and shoulder themselves into places by which we have not passed, in order to obtain another sight of us; every street continuing to pour out its swarms of late comers, to add to the gathering snowball; who are content to take descriptions of our persons, behaviour, and countenances, from those who had the good fortune to have been in time to see us.

Let me tell thee, Jack, I see not why (to judge according to our principles and practices) we should not be as much elated in our march, were this to happen to us, as others may be upon any other the most *mob-attracting* occasion—suppose a lord mayor on his *gawdy*—suppose a victorious general, or ambassador, on his public entry—suppose (as I began with the *lowest*) the *grandest* parade that can be supposed, a coronation—for, in all these, do not the royal guard, the heroic trained bands, the pendent, clinging throngs of spectators, with their waving heads rolling to and fro from house-tops to house-bottoms and street-ways, as I have above described, make the principal part of the raree-show?

And let me ask thee, if thou dost not think that either the mayor, the ambassador, or the general would not make very pitiful figures on their galas, did not the trumpets and tabrets call together the *canaille* to gaze at them?—Nor perhaps should we be the most guilty heroes neither: for who knows how the magistrate may have obtained his gold chain? while the general probably returns from cutting of

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throats, and from murders, sanctified by custom only.—Cæsar, we are told,* had won, at the age of fifty-six, when he was assassinated, fifty pitched battles, had taken by assault above a thousand towns, and slain near 1,200,000 men; I suppose exclusive of those who fell on his own side in slaying them. Are not you and I, Jack, innocent men, and babes in swaddling-clothes, compared to Cæsar, and to his predecessor in heroism, Alexander, dubbed, for murders and depredation, *Magnus?*

The principal difference that strikes me in the comparison between us and the mayor, the ambassador, the general, on *their* gawdies, is, that the mob make a greater noise, a louder huzzaing, in the one case than the other, which is called *acclamation,* and ends frequently in *higher* taste, by throwing dead animals at one another, before they disperse; in which they have as much joy, as in the former part of the triumph: while they will attend us with all the marks of an awful or silent (at most only a whispering) respect; their mouths distended, as if set open with gags, and their voices generally lost in goggle-eyed admiration.

Well, but suppose, after all, we are convicted; what have we to do, but in time make over our estates, that the sheriffs may not revel in our spoils?—There is no fear of being hanged for such a crime as this, while we have *money* or *friends.*—And suppose even the worst, that two or three were to die, have we not a chance, each man of us, to escape? The devil's in them, if they'll hang five for ravishing three!

I know I shall get off for one—were it but for family sake: and being a handsome fellow, I shall have a dozen or two of young maidens, all dressed in white, go to court to beg my life—and what a pretty show they will make, with their white hoods, white gowns, white petticoats, white scarves, white gloves, kneeling for me, with their white handkerchiefs at their eyes, in two pretty rows, as his Majesty walks through them and nods my pardon for their

* Pliny gives this account, putting the number of men slain at 1,100,092. See also Lipsius *de Constantia.*

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sakes!—And, if once pardoned, all is over: for, Jack, in a crime of this nature there lies no appeal, as in a murder.

So thou seest the worst that can happen, should we *not* make the grand tour upon this occasion, but stay and take our trials. But it is most likely that they will not prosecute at all. If not, no risk on our side will be run; only taking our pleasure abroad, at the worst; leaving friends tired of us, in order, after a time, to return to the same friends endeared to us, as we to them, by absence.

This, Jack, is my scheme, at the first running. I know it is capable of improvement—for example: I can land these ladies in France; whip over before they can get a passage back, or before Hickman can have recovered his fright; and so find means to entrap my beloved on board—and then all will be right; and I need not care if I were never to return to England.

Memorandum, To be considered of—Whether, in order to complete my vengeance, I cannot contrive to kidnap away either James Harlowe or Solmes? or both? A man, Jack, would not go into exile for nothing.

—o—

LETTER XXXV.

Mr Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

If, Belford, thou likest not my plot upon Miss Howe, I have three or four more as good in my own opinion; better, perhaps, they will be in thine: and so 'tis but getting loose from thy present engagement, and thou shalt pick and choose. But as for thy three brethren, they must do as I would have them: and so, indeed, must thou—else why am I your general? But I will refer this subject to its proper season. Thou knowest that I never absolutely conclude upon a project, till 'tis time for execution; and then lightning strikes not quicker than I.

And now to the subject next my heart.

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Wilt thou believe me, when I tell thee, that I have so many contrivances rising up and crowding upon me for preference, with regard to my Gloriana, that I hardly know which to choose? I could tell thee of no less than six princely ones, any of which *must* do. But as the dear creature has not grudged giving me trouble, I think I ought not, in gratitude, to spare combustibles for her; but, on the contrary, to make her stare and stand aghast, by springing three or four mines at once.

Thou rememberest what Shakespeare, in his Troilus and Cressida, makes Hector, who, however, is not used to boast, say to Achilles in an interview between them; and which, applied to this watchful lady, and to the vexation she has given me, and to the certainty I now think I have of subduing her, will run thus: supposing the charmer before me; and I meditating her sweet person from head to foot:

> Henceforth, *O watchful fair one*, guard thee well:
> For I'll not kill thee there! nor there! nor there!
> But, by the *zone that circles Venus' waist*,
> I'll kill thee everywhere; yea, o'er and o'er.—
> Thou, wisest *Belford*, pardon me this brag:
> *Her watchfulness* draws folly from my lips;
> But I'll endeavour *deeds* to match the *words*,
> Or may I never———

Then, I imagine thee interposing to qualify my impatience, as Ajax did to Achilles:

> ———Do not chafe thee, cousin:
> ———And let these threats alone,
> Till *accident* or *purpose* bring thee to it.

All that vexes me, in the midst of my gloried-in devices, is, that there is a sorry fellow in the world, who has presumed to question whether the prize, when obtained, is worthy of the pains it costs me: yet knows with what patience and trouble a bird-man will spread an acre of ground with gins and snares; set up his stalking horse, his glasses; plant his decoy-birds, and invite the feathered throng by his whistle; and all his prize at last (the reward of early hours, and of a whole morning's pains) only a simple linnet.

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To be serious, Belford, I must acknowledge that all our pursuits, from childhood to manhood, are only trifles of different sorts and sizes, proportioned to our years and views: but then is not a fine woman the noblest trifle that ever was or could be obtained by man?—And to what purpose do we say *obtained*, if it be not in the way we wish for?—If a man is rather to be *her* prize, than she *his*?

And now, Belford, what dost think?

That thou art a cursed fellow, if——

If—no ifs—but I shall be very sick to-morrow. I shall, 'faith.

Sick!—Why sick? What a-devil shouldst thou be sick for?

For more good reasons than one, Jack.

I should be glad to hear but one.—Sick, quotha! Of all thy roguish inventions I should not have thought of this.

Perhaps thou thinkest my view to be, to draw the lady to my bedside. That's a trick of three or four thousand years old; and I should find it much more to my purpose, if I could get to hers. However, I'll condescend to make thee as wise as myself.

I am excessively disturbed about this smuggling scheme of Miss Howe. I have no doubt that my fair one, were I to make an attempt, and miscarry, will fly from me, if she can. I once believed she loved me: but now I doubt whether she does or not; at least, that it is with such an *ardour*, as Miss Howe calls it, as will make her overlook a premeditated fault, should I be guilty of one.

And what will being sick do for thee?

Have patience. I don't intend to be so very bad as Dorcas shall represent me to be. But yet I know I shall reach confoundedly, and bring up some clotted blood. To be sure I shall break a vessel: there's no doubt of that: and a bottle of Eaton's styptic shall be sent for; but no doctor. If she has *humanity*, she will be concerned. But if she has *love*, let it have been pushed ever so far back, it will on this occasion come forward and show itself; not only in her eye, but in every line of her sweet face.

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I will be very intrepid. I will not fear death or anything else. I will be sure of being well in an hour or two, having formerly found great benefit by this astringent medicine, on occasion of an inward bruise by a fall from my horse in hunting, of which perhaps this malady may be the remains. And this will show her, that though those about me may make the most of it, I do not; and so can have no design in it.

Well, methinks thou sayest, I begin to think tolerably of this device.

I knew thou wouldst, when I explained myself. Another time prepare to wonder; and banish doubt.

Now, Belford, I shall expect that she will show some concern at the broken vessel, as it may be attended with fatal effects, especially to one so fiery in his temper as I have the *reputation* to be thought to be: and the rather, as I shall calmly attribute the accident to the harasses and doubts under which I have laboured for some time past. And this will be a further proof of my love, and will demand a grateful return——

And what then, thou egregious contriver?

Why then I shall have the *less remorse*, if I am to use a little violence: for can *she* deserve compassion, who shows none?

And what if she show a *great deal of concern?*

Then shall I be in hopes of *building on a good foundation.* Love hides a multitude of faults, and diminishes those it cannot hide. Love, when acknowledged, authorises freedom; and freedom begets freedom; and I shall then see how far I can go.

Well but, Lovelace, how the deuce wilt thou, with that full health and vigour of constitution, and with that bloom in thy face, make anybody believe thou art sick?

How!—Why, take a few grains of ipecacuanha; enough to make me reach like a fury.

Good!—But how wilt thou manage to bring up blood, and not hurt thyself?

Foolish fellow! Are there not pigeons and chickens in every poulterer's shop?

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Cry thy mercy.

But then I will be persuaded by Mrs. Sinclair, that I have of late confined myself too much; and so will have a chair called, and be carried to the Park; where I will try to walk half the length of the Mall, or so; and in my return, amuse myself at White's or the Cocoa.

And what will this do?

Questioning again!—I am afraid thou'rt an infidel, Belford.—Why then shall I not know if my beloved offers to go out in my absence?—And shall I not see whether she receives me with tenderness at my return? But this is not all: *I have a foreboding that something affecting will happen while I am out.* But of this more in its place.

And now, Belford, wilt thou, or wilt thou not, allow that it is a right thing to be sick?—Lord, Jack, so much delight do I take in my contrivances, that I shall be half sorry when the occasion for them is over; for never, never, shall I again have such charming exercise for my invention.

Meantime these plaguy women are so impertinent, so full of reproaches, that I know not how to do anything but curse them. And then, truly, they are for helping me out with some of *their* trite and vulgar artifices. Sally, particularly, who pretends to be a mighty contriver, has just now, in an insolent manner, told me, on my rejecting her proffered aids, that I had no mind to conquer; and that I was so *wicked* as to intend to marry, though I would not own it to her.

Because this little devil made her first sacrifice at my altar, she thinks she may take any liberty with me: and what makes her outrageous at times is, that I have for a long time, *studiously*, as she says, slighted her too readily offered favours. But is it not very impudent in her to think that I will be any man's *successor?* It is not come to that neither. This, thou knowest, was always my rule—*Once any other man's*, and *I* know it, and *never more mine.* It is for such as thou, and thy brethren, to take up with *harlots.* I have been always aiming at the merit of a first discoverer.

The more devil I, perhaps thou wilt say, to endeavour to corrupt the uncorrupted.

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But I say, *not*; since, hence, I have but very few adulteries to answer for.

One affair, indeed, at Paris, with a married lady [I believe I never told thee of it] touched my conscience a little: yet brought on by the spirit of intrigue, more than by sheer wickedness. I'll give it thee in brief:

'A French marquis, somewhat in years, employed by his 'court in a public function at that of Madrid, had put his 'charming young new-married wife under the control and '*wardship*, as I may say, of his insolent sister, an old prude.

'I saw the lady at the opera. I liked her at first sight, 'and better at second, when I knew the situation she was 'in. So, pretending to make my addresses to the prude, 'got admittance to both.

'The first thing I had to do, was to compliment my 'prude into shyness by complaints of shyness: next, to 'take advantage of the marquise's situation, between her 'husband's jealousy and his sister's arrogance; and to 'inspire her with resentment; and, as I hoped, with a 'regard to my person. The French ladies have no dislike 'to intrigue.

'The sister began to suspect me: the lady had no mind 'to part with the company of the only man who had been 'permitted to visit her; and told me of her sister's suspicions. 'I put her upon concealing the prude, as if unknown to me, 'in a closet in one of her own apartments, locking her in, 'and putting the key in her own pocket: and she was to 'question me on the sincerity of my professions to her sister, 'in her sister's hearing.

'She complied. My mistress was locked up. The lady 'and I took our seats. I owned fervent love, and made 'high professions: for the marquise put it home to me. 'The prude was delighted with what she heard.

'And how dost think it ended?—I took my advantage 'of the lady herself, who durst not for her life cry out; and 'drew her after me to the next apartment, on pretence of 'going to seek her sister, who all the time was locked up 'in the closet.'

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No woman ever gave me a private meeting for nothing; my dearest Miss Harlowe excepted.

'My ingenuity obtained my pardon: the lady being 'unable to forbear laughing throughout the whole affair, to 'find both so uncommonly tricked; her gaoleress her prisoner, 'safe locked up, and as much pleased as either of us.'

The English, Jack, do not often out-wit the French.

'We had contrivances afterwards equally ingenious, in 'which the lady, the ice once broken [*once subdued, always 'subdued*], co-operated. But a more tender tell-tale revealed 'the secret—revealed it before the marquis could come to 'cover the disgrace. The sister was inveterate; the husband 'irreconcilable; in every respect unfit for a husband, even 'for a *French* one—made, perhaps, more delicate to these 'particulars by the customs of a people among whom he 'was then resident, so contrary to those of his own country-'men. She was obliged to throw herself into my protection '—nor thought herself unhappy in it, till childbed pangs 'seized her: then penitence and death overtook her the 'same hour!'

Excuse a tear, Belford!—She deserved a better fate! What hath such a vile inexorable husband to answer for!—The sister was punished effectually—that pleases me on reflection—the sister effectually punished!—But perhaps I have told thee this story before.

—o—

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday Evening.

JUST returned from an airing with my charmer, complied with after great importunity. She was attended by the two nymphs. They both topt their parts; kept their eyes within bounds; made moral reflections now and then. O Jack! what devils are women, when all tests are got over, and we have completely ruined them!

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The coach carried us to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Muswell Hill; back to Hampstead to the Upper Flask: there, in compliment to the nymphs, my beloved consented to alight and take a little repast. Then home early by Kentish town.

Delightfully easy she, and so respectful and obliging I, all the way, and as we walked out upon the heath, to view the variegated prospects which that agreeable elevation affords, that she promised to take now and then a little excursion with me. I think, Miss Howe, I *think*, said I to myself, every now and then as we walked, that thy wicked devices are superseded.

But let me give thee a few particulars of our conversation in the *circumrotation* we took, while in the coach—She had received a letter from Miss Howe yesterday, I presumed?

She made no answer. How happy should I think myself to be admitted into their correspondence? I would joyfully make an exchange of communications.

So, though I hoped not to succeed by her consent [and little did she think I had so happily in part succeeded without it], I thought it not amiss to urge for it, for several reasons: among others, that I might account to her for my constant employment at my pen; in order to take off her jealousy that *she* was the subject of thy correspondence and mine: and that I might justify *my* secrecy and *uncommunicativeness* by her *own*.

I proceeded therefore—That I loved familiar letter writing, as I had more than once told her, above all the species of writing: it was writing from the heart (without the fetters prescribed by method or study), as the very word *correspondence* implied. Not the heart only; the *soul* was in it. Nothing of body, when friend writes to friend; the mind impelling sovereignly the vassal fingers. It was, in short, friendship recorded; friendship given under hand and seal; demonstrating that the parties were under no apprehension of changing from time or accident, when they so liberally gave testimonies, which would always be ready, on failure or infidelity, to be turned against them.—For my own part,

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it was the principal diversion I had in her absence; but for this innocent amusement, the distance she so frequently kept me at would have been intolerable.

Sally knew my drift; and said she had had the honour to see two or three of my letters, and of Mr. Belford's; and she thought them the most entertaining that she had ever read.

My friend Belford, I said, had a happy talent in the letter writing way; and upon all subjects.

I expected my beloved would have been inquisitive after our subject: but (lying perdue, as I saw) not a word said she. So I touched upon this article myself.

Our topics were various and diffuse: sometimes upon literary articles [she was very attentive upon this]; sometimes upon the public entertainments; sometimes amusing each other with the fruits of the different correspondences we held with persons abroad, with whom we had contracted friendships; sometimes upon the foibles and perfections of our particular friends; sometimes upon our own present and future hopes; sometimes aiming at humour and raillery upon each other.—It might indeed appear to savour of vanity, to suppose my letters would entertain a lady of her delicacy and judgment: but yet I could not but say, that perhaps she would be far from thinking so hardly of me as sometimes she had seemed to do, if she were to see the letters which generally passed between Mr. Belford and me [I hope, Jack, thou hast more manners than to give me the lie, though but in thy heart].

She then spoke: after declining my compliment in such a manner, as only a person could do, who deserved it, she said, for her part, she had always thought me a man of sense [a man of sense, Jack! What a niggardly praise!], —and should therefore hope, that when I wrote, it exceeded even my speech: for that it was impossible, be the letters written in as easy and familiar a style as they would, but that they must have that advantage from sitting down to write them which prompt speech could not always have. She should think it very strange therefore, if my letters

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were barren of sentiment; and *as* strange, if I gave myself liberties upon *premeditation*, which could have no excuse at all, but from a thoughtlessness which itself wanted excuse. —But if Mr. Belford's letters and mine were upon subjects so general, and some of them equally (she presumed) instructive and entertaining, she could not but say that she should be glad to see any of them; and particularly those which Miss Martin had seen and praised.

This was put close.

I looked at her, to see if I could discover any tincture of jealousy in this hint; that *Miss Martin* had seen what I had not shown to *her*. But she did not look it: so I only said I should be very proud to show her not only those, but all that passed between Mr. Belford and me; but I must remind her that she knew the condition.

No, indeed! with a sweet lip pouted out, as saucy as pretty; implying a lovely scorn, that yet can only be lovely in youth so blooming, and beauty so divinely distinguished.

How I long to see such a motion again! *Her* mouth only can give it.

But I am mad with love—yet eternal will be the distance, at the rate I go on: now fire, now ice, my soul is continually upon the *hiss*, as I may say. In vain, however, is the trial to quench—what, after all, is unquenchable.

Pr'ythee, Belford, forgive my nonsense, and my Vulcan-like metaphors—Did I not tell thee, not that I am *sick* of love, but that I am *mad* with it? Why brought I such an angel into such a house? into such company?—And why do I not stop my ears to the sirens, who, knowing my aversion to wedlock, are perpetually touching that string?

I was not willing to be answered so easily: I was sure that what passed between two such young ladies (friends so dear) might be seen by everybody: I had more reason than anybody to wish to see the letters that passed between her and Miss Howe; because I was sure they must be full of admirable instruction, and one of the dear correspondents had deigned to wish my entire reformation.

She looked at me as if she would look me through: I

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thought I *felt* eye-beam after eye-beam penetrate my shivering reins.—But she was silent. Nor needed her eyes the assistance of speech.

Nevertheless, a little recovering myself, I hoped that nothing unhappy had befallen either Miss Howe or her mother. The letter of yesterday sent by a particular hand: she opening it with great emotion—seeming to have expected it sooner—were the reasons for my apprehensions.

We were then at Muswell Hill: *a pretty country within the eye,* to Polly, was the remark, instead of replying to *me.*

But I was not so to be answered—I should expect some charming subjects and characters from two such pens: I hoped everything went on well between Mr. Hickman and Miss Howe. Her mother's heart, I said, was set upon that match: Mr. Hickman was not without his merits: he was what the ladies called a SOBER man: but I must needs say, that I thought Miss Howe deserved a husband of a very different cast!

This, I supposed, would have engaged her into a subject from which I could have wiredrawn something:—for Hickman is one of her favourites—why, I can't divine, except for the sake of opposition of character to that of thy honest friend.

But she cut me short by a look of disapprobation, and another cool remark upon a distant view; and, *How far off, Miss Horton, do you think that clump of trees may be?* pointing out of the coach.—So I had done.

Here endeth all I have to write concerning our conversation on this our agreeable airing.

We have both been writing ever since we came home. I am to be favoured with her company for an hour, before she retires to rest.

All that obsequious love can suggest, in order to engage her tenderest sentiments for me against to-morrow's sickness, will I aim at when we meet. But at parting will complain of a disorder in my stomach.

WE have met. All was love and unexceptionable respect on my part. Ease and complaisance on hers. She was con-

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cerned for my disorder. So sudden!—Just as we parted! But it was nothing. I should be quite well by the morning.

Faith, Jack, I think I am sick already. Is it possible for such a giddy fellow as me to *persuade* myself to be ill! I am a better mimic at this rate than I wish to be. But every nerve and fibre of me is always ready to contribute its aid, whether by health or by ailment, to carry a resolved-on roguery into execution.

Dorcas has transcribed for me the whole letter of Miss Howe, dated Sunday, May 14,* of which before I had only extracts. She found no other letter added to that parcel: but this, and that which I copied myself in character last Sunday whilst she was at church, relating to the smuggling scheme,† are enough for me.

DORCAS tells me that her lady has been removing her papers from the mahogany chest into a wainscot box, which held her linen, and which she put into her dark closet. We have no key of that at present. No doubt but all her letters, previous to those I have come at, are in that box. Dorcas is uneasy upon it: yet hopes that her lady does not suspect her; for she is sure that she laid in everything as she found it.

—o—

LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

COCOA-TREE, *Saturday, May 27.*

THIS ipecacuanha is a most disagreeable medicine. That these cursed physical folks can find out nothing to do us good, but what would poison the devil! In the other world, were they only to take physic, it would be punishment enough of itself for a misspent life. A doctor at one elbow, and an apothecary at the other, and the poor soul labouring under their prescribed operations, he need no worse tormentors.

* See Letter IX. of this vol. † See Letter XXII. of this vol.

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But now this was to take down my countenance. It has done it: for, with violent reachings, having taken enough to make me sick, and not enough water to carry it off, I presently looked as if I had kept my bed a fortnight. *Ill jesting*, as I thought in the midst of the exercise, *with edge tools*, and worse with *physical ones*.

Two hours it held me. I had forbid Dorcas to let her lady know anything of the matter; out of tenderness to her; being willing, when she knew my prohibition, to let her see that I *expected* her to be concerned for me.—

Well, but Dorcas was nevertheless a *woman*, and she can *whisper* to her lady the secret she is enjoined to keep!

Come hither, toad [sick as the devil at the instant]; let me see what a mixture of grief and surprise may be beat up together in thy puden-face.

That won't do. That dropt jaw, and mouth distended into the long oval, is more upon the horrible than the grievous.

Nor that pinking and winking with thy *odious eyes*, as my charmer once called them.

A little better *that*; yet not quite right: but keep your mouth closer. You have a muscle or two which you have no command of, between your cheek bone and your lips, that should carry one corner of your mouth up towards your crow's foot, and that down to meet it.

There! Bégone! Be in a plaguy hurry running up stairs and down, to fetch from the dining-room what you carry up on purpose to fetch, till motion extraordinary put you out of breath, and give you the sigh natural.

What's the matter, Dorcas?

Nothing, Madam.

My beloved wonders she has not seen me this morning, no doubt; but is too shy to say she wonders. Repeated What's the matter, however, as Dorcas runs up and down stairs by her door, bring on, O Madam! my master! my poor master!

What! How! When!—and all the monosyllables of surprise.

[*Within parenthesis* let me tell thee, that I have often

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thought that the little words in the republic of letters, like the little folks in a nation, are the most significant. The *trisyllables*, and the *rumblers* of syllables more than *three*, are but the good-for-little *magnates*.]

I must not tell you, Madam—My master ordered me not to tell you—but he is in a worse way than he thinks for!—But he would not have *you* frighted.

High concern took possession of every sweet feature. She pitied me!—By my soul, she pitied me!

Where is he?

Too much in a hurry for good manners [*another parenthesis, Jack!* Good manners are so little natural, that we ought to be *composed* to observe them: politeness will not live in a storm.] I cannot stay to answer questions, cries the wench—though desirous to answer [*a third parenthesis*—Like the people crying proclamations, running away from the customers they want to sell to.] This hurry puts the lady in a hurry to ask [*a fourth*, by way of embellishing the third!] as the other does the people in a hurry to buy. And I have in my eye now a whole street raised, and running after a proclamation or express-crier, as if the first was a thief, the other his pursuers.

At last, O Lord! let Mrs. Lovelace know!—There is danger to be sure! whispered from one nymph to another; but at the door, and so loud, that my listening fair one might hear.

Out she darts—As how! as how, Dorcas!

O Madam—A vomiting of blood! A vessel broke, to be sure.

Down she hastens; finds every one as busy over my blood in the entry, as if it were that of the Neapolitan saint.

In steps my charmer, with a face of sweet concern.

How do you, Mr. Lovelace!

Oh, my best love!—Very well!—Very well!—Nothing at all! nothing of consequence!—I shall be well in an instant!—Straining again! for I was indeed plaguy sick, though no more blood came.

In short, Belford, I have gained my end. I see the dear

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soul loves me. I see she forgives me all that's past. I see I have credit for a new score.

Miss Howe, I defy thee, my dear—Mrs. Townsend!—Who the devil are you?—Troop away with your contrabands. No smuggling! nor smuggler, but myself! Nor will the choicest of my fair one's favours be long prohibited goods to me!

EVERY one is now sure that she loves me. Tears were in her eyes more than once for me. She suffered me to take her hand, and kiss it as often as I pleased. On Mrs. Sinclair's mentioning that I too much confined myself, she pressed me to take an airing; but obligingly desired me to be careful of myself. Wished I would advise with a physician. *God made physicians,* she said.

I did not think that, Jack. God indeed made us all. But I fancy she meant *physic* instead of *physicians;* and then the phrase might mean what the vulgar phrase means—*God sends meat, the Devil cooks.*

I was well already, on taking the styptic from *her* dear hands.

On her requiring me to take the air, I asked if I might have the honour of her company in a coach; and this, that I might observe if she had an intention of going out in my absence.

If she thought a chair were not a more proper vehicle for my case, she would with all her heart!

There's a precious!

I kissed her hand again! She was all goodness!—Would to Heaven I better deserved it, I said!—But all were golden days before us!—Her presence and generous concern had done everything. I was well! Nothing ailed me. But since my beloved will have it so, I'll take a little airing!—Let a chair be called!—Oh, my charmer! *were I to have owed this indisposition to my late harasses and to the uneasiness I have had for disobliging you;* all is infinitely compensated by your goodness.—All the art of healing is in your smiles!—Your late displeasure was the only malady!

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While Mrs. Sinclair, and Dorcas, and Polly, and even poor silly Mabel [for Sally went out, as my angel came in] with uplifted hands and eyes, stood thanking Heaven that I was better, in audible whispers: See the power of love, cried one!—What a charming husband, another!—Happy couple, all!

Oh, how the dear creature's cheek mantled!—How her eyes sparkled!—How sweetly acceptable is praise to conscious merit, while it but reproaches when applied to the undeserving!—What a new, what a gay creation it makes at once in a diffident or dispirited heart!

And now, Belford, was it not worth while to be sick? And yet I must tell thee, that too many pleasanter expedients offer themselves, to make trial any more of this confounded ipecacuanha.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Saturday, May 27.

Mr. Lovelace, my dear, has been very ill. Suddenly taken. With a vomiting of blood in great quantities. Some vessel broken. He complained of a disorder in his stomach over night. I was the more affected with it, *as I am afraid it was occasioned by the violent contentions between us.*—But was I in fault?

How lately did I think I hated him!—But hatred and anger, I see, are but temporary passions with me. One cannot, my dear, hate people in danger of death, or who are in distress or affliction. My heart, I find, is not proof against kindness, and acknowledgments of errors committed.

He took great care to have his illness concealed from me as long as he could. So tender in the violence of his disorder!—So desirous to make the best of it!—I wish he had not been ill in my sight. I was too much affected—everybody alarming me with his danger. The poor man, from such high health, so *suddenly* taken!—and so unprepared!—

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He is gone out in a chair. I advised him to do so. I fear that my advice was wrong; since quiet in such a disorder must needs be best. We are apt to be so ready, in cases of emergency, to give our advice, without judgment, or waiting for it!—I proposed a physician indeed; but he would not hear of one. I have great honour for the faculty; and the greater, as I have always observed that those who treat the professors of the art of healing contemptuously, too generally treat higher institutions in the same manner.

I am really very uneasy. For I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him, and to the women below. *They* indeed will excuse me, as they think us married. But if he be not generous, I shall have cause to regret this surprise; which (as I had reason to think myself unaccountably treated by him) has taught me more than I knew of myself.

'Tis true I have owned more than once, that I could have liked Mr. Lovelace above all men. I remember the debates you and I used to have on this subject, when I was your happy guest. You used to say, and once you wrote,* that men of his cast are the men that our sex do not *naturally* dislike: while I held that such were not (however *that* might be) the men we *ought* to like. But what with my relations precipitating of me, on one hand, and what with his unhappy character, and embarrassing ways, on the other, I had no more leisure than inclination to examine my own heart in this particular. And this reminds me of a passage in one of your former letters, which I will transcribe, though it was written in raillery. 'May it not be,' say you,† 'that you have had 'such persons to deal with, as have not allowed you to attend 'to the throbs; or if you had them a little now and then, 'whether, having had two accounts to place them to, you 'have not by mistake put them to the wrong one?' A passage, which, although it came into my mind when Mr. Lovelace was least exceptionable, yet that I have denied any efficacy to, when he has teased and vexed me, and given me cause of suspicion. For, after all, my dear, Mr. Lovelace is not wise in all his ways. And should we not endeavour, as

* See Letter XIV. of this volume. † See vol. i. Letter XII.

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much as is possible (where we are not attached by *natural* ties), to like and dislike as reason bids us, and according to the merit or demerit of the object? If love, as it is called, is allowed to be an excuse for our most unreasonable follies, and to lay level all the fences that a careful education has surrounded us by, what is meant by the doctrine of subduing our passions?—But, oh, my dearest friend, am I not guilty of a punishable fault, were I to love this man of errors? And has not my own heart deceived me, when I thought I did not? And what must be that love, that has not some degree of purity for its object? I am afraid of recollecting some passages in my cousin Morden's letter.*—And yet why fly I from subjects that, duly considered, might tend to correct and purify my heart? I have carried, I doubt, my notions on this head too high, not to practice, but for *my* practice. Yet think me not guilty of prudery neither; for had I found out as much of myself before; or, rather, had he given me heart's-ease enough before to find it out, you should have had my confession sooner.

Nevertheless, let me tell you (what I hope I may justly tell you), that if again he give me cause to resume distance and reserve, I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections to enable me to keep my passions under.—What can we do more than govern ourselves by the temporary lights lent us?

You will not wonder that I am grave on this detection—*Detection*, must I call it? What can I call it?

Dissatisfied with myself, I am afraid to look back upon what I have written: and yet know not how to have done writing. I never was in such an odd frame of mind.—I know not how to describe it.—Was *you* ever *so?*—Afraid of the censure of her you love—yet not conscious that you deserve it?

Of this, however, I am convinced, that I should *indeed* deserve censure, if I kept any secret of my heart from you.

But I will not add another word, after I have assured you, that I will look still more narrowly into myself: and that I am

Your equally sincere and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

* See Letter XCVI. of vol. ii.

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LETTER XXXIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday Evening.

I HAD a charming airing. No return of my malady. My heart perfectly easy, how could my stomach be otherwise?

But when I came home, I found that my sweet soul had been alarmed by *a new incident*—The inquiry after us both, in a very suspicious manner, and that by description of our persons, and not by names, by a servant in a blue livery turned up and trimmed with yellow.

Dorcas was called to him, as the upper servant; and she refusing to answer any of the fellow's questions, unless he told his business, and from whom he came, the fellow (as short as she) said, that if she would not answer *him*, perhaps she might answer somebody *else;* and went away out of humour.

Dorcas hurried up to her lady, and alarmed her not only with the fact, but with her own conjectures; adding that he was an ill-looking fellow, and she was sure could come for no good.

The livery and the features of the servant were particularly inquired after, and as particularly described—*Lord bless her! no end of her alarms, she thought!* And then did her apprehensions anticipate every evil that could happen.

She wished Mr. Lovelace would come in.

Mr. Lovelace came in soon after; all lively, grateful, full of hopes, of duty, of love, to thank his charmer, and to congratulate with her upon the cure she had performed. And then she told the story, with all its circumstances; and Dorcas, to point her lady's fears, told us that the servant was a sun-burnt fellow, and looked as if he had been at sea.

He was then, no doubt, Captain Singleton's servant, and the next news she should hear, was, that the house was surrounded by a whole ship's crew; the vessel lying no farther off, as she understood, than Rotherhithe.

Impossible, I said. Such an *attempt* would not be ushered

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in by such a *manner of inquiry*. And why may it not rather be a servant of your cousin Morden, with notice of his arrival, and of his design to attend you?

This surmise delighted her. Her apprehensions went off, and she was at leisure to congratulate me upon my sudden recovery; which she did in the most obliging manner.

But we had not sat long together, when Dorcas again came fluttering up to tell us, that the footman, the *very* footman, was again at the door, and inquired whether Mr. Lovelace and his lady, *by name*, had not lodgings in this house? He asked, he told Dorcas, for no harm. But his disavowing of harm, was a demonstration with my apprehensive fair one, that harm was intended. And as the fellow had not been answered by Dorcas, I proposed to go down to the street parlour, and hear what he had to say.

I see your causeless terror, my dearest life, said I, and your impatience.—Will you be pleased to walk down—and without being observed (for he shall come no farther than the parlour door), you may hear all that passes?

She consented. We went down. Dorcas bid the man come forward. Well, friend, what is your business with Mr. and Mrs. Lovelace?

Bowing, scraping, I am sure *you* are the gentleman, sir. Why, sir, my business is only to know if your honour be here, and to be spoken with; or if you shall be here for any time?

Whom came you from?

From a gentleman who ordered me to say, if I was *made* to tell, but not else, it was from a friend of Mr. John Harlowe, Mrs. Lovelace's eldest uncle.

The dear creature was ready to sink upon this. *It was but of late that she had provided herself with salts.* She pulled them out.

Do you know anything of Colonel Morden, friend? said I.

No; I never heard of his name.

Of Captain Singleton?

No, sir. But the gentleman, my master, is a Captain too.

What is his name?

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I don't know if I should tell.

There can be no harm in telling the gentleman's name, if you come upon a good account.

That I do; for my master told me so; and there is not an honester gentleman on the face of *God's yearth.*—His name is Captain Tomlinson, sir.

I don't know such a one.

I believe not, sir. He was pleased to say he don't know your honour, sir; but I heard him say as how he should not be an unwelcome visitor to you for all that.

Do you know such a man as Captain Tomlinson, my dearest life [*aside*], your uncle's friend?

No; but my uncle may have acquaintance, no doubt, that I don't know.—But I hope [trembling] this is not a trick.

Well, friend, if your master has anything to say to Mr. Lovelace, you may tell him that Mr. Lovelace is here; and will see him whenever he pleases.

The dear creature looked as if afraid that my engagement was too prompt for my own safety; and away went the fellow—*I wondering, that she might not wonder,* that this Captain Tomlinson, whoever he were, came not himself, or sent not a letter the second time, when he had reason to suppose that I might be here.

Meantime, for fear that this should be a contrivance of James Harlowe, who, I said, loved plotting, though he had not a head turned for it, I gave some precautionary directions to the servants, and the women, whom, for the greater parade, I assembled before us: and my beloved was resolved *not to stir abroad till she saw the issue of this odd affair.*

And here must I close, *though in so great a puzzle.*

Only let me add that poor Belton wants thee; for I dare not stir for my life.

Mowbray and Tourville skulk about like vagabonds, without heads, without hands, without souls; having neither you nor me to conduct them. They tell me, they shall rust beyond the power of oil or action to brighten them up, or give them motion.

How goes it with thy uncle?

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LETTER XL.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday, May 28.

THIS story of Captain Tomlinson employed us not only for the time we were together last night, but all the while we sat at breakfast this morning. She would still have it that it was the prelude to some mischief from Singleton. I insisted (according to my former hint) that it might much more probably be a method taken by Colonel Morden to alarm her, previous to a personal visit. Travelled gentlemen affected to surprise in this manner. And why, dearest creature, said I, must everything that happens, which we cannot immediately account for, be what we least wish?

She had had so many disagreeable things befall her of late, that her fears were too often stronger than her hopes.

And this, Madam, makes me apprehensive that you will get into so low-spirited a way, that you will not be able to enjoy the happiness that seems to await us.

Her duty and her gratitude, she gravely said, to the Dispenser of all good, would secure her, she hoped, against unthankfulness. And a thankful spirit was the same as a joyful one.

So, Belford, for all her future joys she depends entirely upon the invisible Good. She is certainly right; since those who fix least upon second causes are the least likely to be disappointed—And is not this gravity for her gravity?

She had hardly done speaking, when Dorcas came running up in a hurry—she set even *my* heart into a palpitation—thump, thump, thump, like a precipitated pendulum in a clock-case—flutter, flutter, flutter, my charmer's, as by her sweet bosom rising to her chin I saw.

This lower class of people, my beloved herself observed, were for ever aiming at the *stupid wonderful*, and for making even common incidents matter of surprise.

Why the devil, said I to the wench, this alarming hurry? —And with your spread fingers, and your O Madams, and

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O sirs!—and be cursed to you! Would there have been a second of time difference, had you come up slowly?

Captain Tomlinson, sir!

Captain Devilson, what care I?—Do you see how you have disordered your lady?

Good Mr. Lovelace, said my charmer, trembling [see, Jack, when she has an end to serve, I am *good* Mr. Lovelace], if—if my brother,—if Captain Singleton should appear—pray now—I beseech you—let me beg of you—to govern your temper—My brother is my brother—Captain Singleton is but an *agent*.

My dearest life, folding my arms about her [when she asks favours, thought I, the devil's in it, if she will not allow of such innocent freedom as this, from *good* Mr. Lovelace too], you shall be witness of all passes between us.—Dorcas, desire the gentleman to walk up.

Let me retire to my chamber first!—Let me not be known to be in the house!

Charming dear!—Thou seest, Belford, she is afraid of leaving me!—Oh, the little witchcrafts! Were it not for surprises now and then, how would an honest man know where to have them?

She withdrew to listen.—And though this incident has not turned out to answer *all I wished from it*, yet is it necessary, if I would acquaint thee with my *whole circulation*, to be very particular in what passed between Captain Tomlinson and me.

Enter Captain Tomlinson, in a riding-dress, whip in hand.

Your servant, sir,—Mr. Lovelace, I presume?

My name is Lovelace, sir.

Excuse the day, sir.—Be pleased to excuse my garb. I am obliged to go out of town directly, that I may return at night.

The day is a good day. Your garb needs no apology.

When I sent my servant, I did not *know that I should find time to do myself this honour*. All that I thought I could do to oblige my friend this journey, was *only* to assure myself

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of your abode; and whether there were a probability of being admitted to the speech either of you or your lady.

Sir, you best know your own motives. What your time will permit you to do, you also best know. And here I am, attending your pleasure.

My charmer owned afterwards her concern on my being so short. Whatever I shall mingle of her emotions, thou wilt easily guess I had afterwards.

Sir, I hope no offence. I intend none.

None—None at all, sir.

Sir, I have no interest in the affair I come about. I may appear officious; and if I thought I should, I would decline any concern in it, after I have just hinted what it is.

And pray, sir, what is it?

May I ask you, sir, without offence, whether you wish to be reconciled, and to co-operate upon honourable terms, with *one* gentleman of the name of Harlowe; preparative, as it may be hoped, to a general reconciliation?

Oh, how my heart fluttered! cried my charmer.

I can't tell, sir—[*and then it fluttered still more, no doubt:*] The whole family have used me extremely ill. They have taken greater liberties with my character than are justifiable; and with my family *too;* which I can less forgive.

Sir, sir, I have done. I beg pardon for this intrusion.

My beloved was then ready to sink, and thought very hardly of me.

But, pray, sir, to the immediate purpose of your present commission; since a commission it seems to be.

It is a commission, sir; and such a one as I thought would be agreeable to all parties, or I should not have given myself concern about it.

Perhaps it *may*, sir, when known. But let me ask you one previous question—Do you know Colonel Morden, sir?

No, sir. If you mean *personally*, I do not. But I have heard my good friend Mr. John Harlowe talk of him with great respect; and as a co-trustee with him in a certain trust.

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Lovel. I thought it probable, sir, that the Colonel might be arrived; that you might be a gentleman of his acquaintance; and that something of an agreeable surprise might be intended.

Capt. Had Colonel Morden been in England, Mr. John Harlowe would have known it; and then I should not have been a stranger to it.

Lovel. Well but, sir, have you then any commission to me from Mr. John Harlowe?

Capt. Sir, I will tell you, as briefly as I can, the whole of what I have to say; but you'll excuse *me* also a previous question, for which curiosity is not my motive; but it is necessary to be answered before I can proceed; as you will judge when you hear it.

Lovel. What, pray, sir, is your question?

Capt. Briefly, whether you are actually, and *bonâ fide*, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe?

I started, and in a haughty tone, Is this, sir, a question that *must* be answered before you can proceed in the business you have undertaken?

I mean no offence, Mr. Lovelace. Mr. Harlowe sought to me to undertake this office. I have daughters and nieces of my own. I thought it a good office, or I, who have many considerable affairs upon my hands, had not accepted of it. I know the world; and will take the liberty to say, that if that young lady——

Captain Tomlinson, I think you are called?

My name is Tomlinson.

Why then, Captain Tomlinson, no *liberty*, as you call it, will be taken well, that is not extremely delicate, when that lady is mentioned.

When you had heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, and had found I had so behaved as to make the caution necessary, it would have been just to have given it.—Allow me to say, I know what is due to the character of a woman of virtue, as well as any man alive.

Why, sir! Why, Captain Tomlinson, you seem warm. If you intend anything by this [*Oh, how I trembled!* said the

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Lady, *when she took notice of this part of our conversation afterwards,*] I will only say that this is a privileged place. It is at present my home, and an asylum for any gentleman who thinks it worth his while to inquire after me, be the manner or end of his inquiry what it will.

I know not, sir, that I have given occasion for this. I make no scruple to attend you *elsewhere,* if I am troublesome here. I was told I had a warm young gentleman to deal with: but as I knew my intention, and that my commission was an amicable one, I was the less concerned about that. I am twice your age, Mr. Lovelace, I daresay: but I do assure you, that if either my message or my manner give you offence, I can suspend the one or the other for a day, or for ever, as you like. And so, sir, any time before eight to-morrow morning, you will let me know your further commands.—And was going to tell me where he might be found.

Captain Tomlinson, said I, you answer well. I love a man of spirit. Have you not been in the army?

I have, sir; but have *turned my sword into a ploughshare,* as the Scripture has it,—[*there was a clever fellow, Jack!—he was a good man with somebody, I warrant!* Oh, what a fine coat and cloak for a hypocrite will a text of Scripture, properly applied, make at any time in the eye of the pious! —how easily are the good folks taken in!]—and all my delight, added he, for some years past, has been in cultivating my paternal estate. I love a brave man, Mr. Lovelace, as well as ever I did in my life. But let me tell you, sir, that when you come to my time of life, you will be of opinion, that there is not so much true bravery in youthful choler, as you may now think there is.

A clever fellow again, Belford!—Ear and heart, both at once, he took in my charmer!—*'Tis well,* she says, *there are some men who have wisdom in their anger.*

Well, Captain, that is reproof for reproof. So we are upon a footing. And now give me the pleasure of hearing the import of your commission.

Sir, you must first allow me to repeat my question: Are

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you really, and *bona fide*, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe? or are you not yet married?

Bluntly put, Captain. But if I answer that I *am*, what then?

Why then, sir, I shall say that you are a man of honour.

That I hope I am, whether *you* say it or not, Captain Tomlinson.

Sir, I will be very frank in all I have to say on this subject—Mr. John Harlowe has lately found out that you and his niece are both in the same lodgings; that you have been long so; and that the lady was at the play with you yesterday was se'night; and he hopes that you are actually married. He has indeed heard that you *are;* but as he knows your enterprising temper, and that you have declared that you disdain a relation to their family, he is willing by me to have your marriage confirmed from your own mouth, before he take the steps he is inclined to take in his niece's favour. You will allow me to say, Mr. Lovelace, that he will not be satisfied with an answer that admits of the least doubt.

Let me tell you, Captain Tomlinson, that it is a high degree of vileness for any man to suppose——

Sir—Mr. Lovelace—don't put yourself into a passion. The lady's relations are jealous of the honour of their family. They have prejudices to overcome as well as you—advantage may have been taken—and the lady, at the *time*, not to blame.

This lady, sir, could give no such advantages: and if she *had*, what must the *man* be, Captain Tomlinson, who could have taken them?—Do you know the lady, sir?

I never had the honour to see her but once; and that was at church; and should not know her again.

Not know her again, sir!—I thought there was not a man living who had once seen her, and would not know her among a thousand.

I remember, sir, that I thought I never saw a finer woman in my life. But, Mr. Lovelace, I believe you will allow that it is better that her relations should have wronged

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you, than you the *lady*, I hope, sir, you will permit me to repeat my question.

Enter Dorcas, in a hurry.

A gentleman, this minute, sir, desires to speak with your honour—[*My lady, sir!—Aside.*]

Could the dear creature put *Dorcas* upon telling this fib, yet want to save *me* one?

Desire the gentleman to walk into one of the parlours. I will wait on him presently. [*Exit Dorcas.*

The dear creature, I doubted not, wanted to instruct me how to answer the Captain's home-put. I knew how I intended to answer it—plumb, thou may'st be sure—but Dorcas's message staggered me. And yet I was upon one of my masterstrokes—which was, to take advantage of the captain's inquiries, and to make her *own her marriage before him*, as she had done to the people below; and if she had been brought to that, to induce her, for her uncle's satisfaction, to write him a letter of gratitude; which of course must have been signed *Clarissa Lovelace*. I was loth, therefore, thou may'st believe, to attend her sudden commands: and yet, afraid of pushing matters beyond recovery with her, I thought proper to lead him from the question, to account for himself and for Mr. Harlowe's coming at the knowledge of where we are; and for other particulars which I knew would engage her attention; and which might possibly convince her of the necessity there was for her to acquiesce in the affirmative I was disposed to give. And this for her own sake; for what, as I asked her afterwards, is it to me, whether I am ever reconciled to her family?—A family, Jack, which I must for ever despise.

You think, Captain, that I have answered doubtfully to the question you put. You *may* think so. And you must know that I have a good deal of pride; and only that you are a gentleman, and seem in this affair to be governed by generous motives, or I should ill brook being interrogated as to my honour to a lady so dear to me.—But before I

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answer more directly to the point, pray satisfy me in a question or two that I shall put to *you*.

With all my heart, sir. Ask me what questions you please, I will answer them with sincerity and candour.

You say Mr. Harlowe has found out that we were at a play together: and that we were both in the same lodgings—How, pray, came he at his knowledge?—for, let me tell you that I have, for certain considerations (not respecting myself, I will assure you), condescended that our abode should be kept secret. And this has been so strictly observed, that even Miss Howe, though she and my beloved correspond, knows not directly where to send to us.

Why, sir, the person who saw you at the play was a tenant of Mr. John Harlowe. He watched all your motions. When the play was done, he followed your coach to your lodgings. And early the next day, Sunday, he took horse, and acquainted his landlord with what he had observed.

Lovel. How oddly things come about!—But does any other of the Harlowes know where we are?

Capt. It is an absolute secret to every other person of the family; and so it is intended to be kept: as also that Mr. John Harlowe is willing to enter into treaty with you, by me, if his niece *be actually married;* for perhaps he is aware that he shall have difficulty enough with some people to bring about the desirable reconciliation, although he could give them this assurance.

I doubt it not, Captain—to James Harlowe is all the family folly owning.—Fine fools! [*heroically stalking about*] to be governed by one to whom malice and not genius, gives the busy liveliness that distinguishes him from a natural!—But how long, pray, sir, has Mr. John Harlowe been in this pacific disposition?

I will tell you, Mr. Lovelace, and the occasion; and be very explicit upon it, and upon all that concerns you to know of me, and of the commission I have undertaken to execute; and this the rather, as when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied that I am not an officious man in this my present address to you.

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I am all attention, Captain Tomlinson.

And so I doubt not was my beloved.

Capt. 'You must know, sir, that I have not been *many* 'months in Mr. John Harlowe's neighbourhood. I re- 'moved from Northamptonshire, partly for the sake of 'better managing one or two executorships, which I could 'not avoid engaging in (the affairs of which frequently call 'me to town, and are part of my present business); and partly 'for the sake of occupying a neglected farm, which has '*lately* fallen into my hands. But though an acquaintance 'of no longer standing, and that commencing on the bowl- 'ing-green [*uncle John is a great bowler, Belford*] (upon 'my decision of a point to every one's satisfaction, which 'was appealed to me by all the gentlemen, and which 'might have been attended with bad consequences), no two 'brothers have a more cordial esteem for each other. You 'know, Mr. Lovelace, that there is a *consent*, as I may 'call it, in some minds, which will unite them stronger 'together in a few hours, than years can do with others, 'whom yet we see not with disgust.'

Lovel. Very true, Captain.

Capt. 'It was on the foot of this avowed friendship on 'both sides, that on Monday the 15th, as I very well 'remember, Mr. Harlowe invited himself home with me. 'And when there, he acquainted me with the whole of the 'unhappy affair that had made them all so uneasy. Till 'then I knew it only by report; for, intimate as we were, 'I forbore to speak of what was so near his heart, till he 'began first. And then he told me, that he had had an 'application made to him, two or three days before, by a 'gentleman whom he named,* to induce him not only to 'be reconciled himself to his niece, but to forward for her 'a general reconciliation.'

'A like application, he told me, had been made to his 'sister Harlowe, by a good woman, whom everybody re- 'spected; who had intimated that his niece, if encouraged, 'would again put herself into the protection of her friends,

* See Letters III. and IX. of this volume.

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'*and leave you:* but if not, that *she must unavoidably be yours.*'

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, I make no mischief.—You look concerned—you sigh, sir.

Proceed, Captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.—*And I sighed still more profoundly.*

Capt. 'They all thought it extremely particular, that a 'lady should decline marriage with a man she had so lately 'gone away with.'

Pray, Captain—*pray,* Mr. Tomlinson—no more of this subject. My beloved is an angel. In everything unblamable. Whatever faults there have been, have been *theirs* and *mine.* What you would further say, is, that the *unforgiving* family rejected her application. They did. She and I had had a misunderstanding. *The falling out of lovers* —you know, Captain.—We have been happier ever since.

Capt. 'Well, sir; but Mr. John Harlowe could not but 'better consider the matter *afterwards.* And he desired 'my advice how to act in it. He told me that no father 'ever loved a daughter as he loved this niece of his; whom 'indeed he used to call his *daughter-niece.* He said she 'had really been unkindly treated by her brother and sister: 'and as your alliance, sir, was far from being a discredit to 'their family, he would do his endeavour to reconcile all 'parties, if he could be sure that ye were actually man and 'wife.'

Lovel. And what, pray, Captain, was your advice?

Capt. 'I gave it as my opinion, that if his niece were 'unworthily treated, and in distress (as he apprehended 'from the application to him), he would soon hear of her 'again: but that it was likely, that this application was 'made without *expecting* it would succeed; and as a salvo 'only, to herself, for marrying without their consent. 'And the rather thought I so, as he had told me that it 'came from a young lady her friend, and not in a direct 'way *from herself;* which young lady was no favourite of 'the family; and therefore would hardly have been em-'ployed, had success been expected.'

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Lovel. Very well, Captain Tomlinson—pray proceed.

Capt. 'Here the matter rested till last Sunday evening, 'when Mr. John Harlowe came to me with the man who 'had seen you and your lady (as I presume she is) at the 'play; and who had assured him that you both lodged in 'the same house.—And then the application having been 'so lately made, which implied that you were not then 'married, he was so uneasy for his niece's honour, that I 'advised him to despatch to town some one in whom he 'could confide, to make proper inquiries.'

Lovel. Very well, Captain—And was such a person employed on such an errand by her uncle?

Capt. 'A trusty and discreet person was accordingly 'sent; and last Tuesday, I think it was (for he returned 'to us on the Wednesday), he made the inquiries among 'the neighbours first.' [*The very inquiry, Jack, that gave 'us all so much uneasiness.**] 'But finding that none of 'them could give any satisfactory account, the lady's 'woman was come at, who declared that you were actually 'married. But the inquirist keeping himself on the 'reserve as to his employers, the girl refused to tell the 'day, or to give him other particulars.'

Lovel. You give a very clear account of everything, Captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.

Capt. The gentleman returned: and, on his report, Mr. 'Harlowe, having still doubts, and being willing to proceed 'on some grounds in so important a point, besought me '(as my affairs called me frequently to town) to undertake 'this matter. "You, Mr. Tomlinson, he was pleased to "say, have children of your own: you know the world: "you know what I drive at: you will proceed, I am sure, "with understanding and spirit: and whatever you are "satisfied with shall satisfy me."

Enter Dorcas again in a hurry.

Sir, the gentleman is impatient.

I will attend him presently.

* See Letter XXX. of this volume.

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The Captain then accounted for his not calling in person, when he had reason to think us here.

He said he had business of consequence a few miles out of town, whither he thought he must have gone yesterday, and having been obliged to put off this little journey till this day, and understanding that we were within, not knowing whether he should have such another opportunity, he was willing to try his good fortune before he set out; and this made him come booted and spurred, as I saw him.

He dropped a hint in commendation of the people of the house; but it was in such a way, as to give no room to suspect that he thought it *necessary* to inquire after the character of persons, who make so genteel an appearance, as he observed they do.

And here let me remark, that my beloved might collect another circumstance in favour of the people below, had she doubted their characters, from the silence of her uncle's inquirist on Tuesday among the neighbours.

Capt. 'And now, sir, that I believe I have satisfied you 'in everything relating to my commission, I hope you will 'permit me to repeat my question—which is—

Enter Dorcas again, out of breath.

Sir, the gentleman will step up to *you.* [*My lady is impatient. She wonders at your honour's delay. Aside.*]

Excuse me, Captain, for one moment.

I have stayed my full time, Mr. Lovelace. What may result from my question and your answer, whatever it shall be, may take us up time.—And you are engaged. Will you permit me to attend you in the morning, before I set out on my return?

You will then breakfast with me, Captain?

It must be early if I do. I must reach my own house to-morrow night, or I shall make the best of wives unhappy, and I have two or three places to call at in my way.

It shall be by seven o'clock, if you please, Captain. We are early folks. And this I will tell you, that if ever I am reconciled to a family so implacable as I have always found

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the Harlowes to be, it must be by the mediation of so cool and so moderate a gentleman as yourself.

And so, with the highest civilities on both sides, we parted. But for the private satisfaction of so good a man, I left him out of doubt that we were man and wife, though I did not directly aver it.

—o—

LETTER XLI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday Night.

THIS Captain Tomlinson is one of the happiest as well as one of the best men in the world. What would I give to stand as high in my beloved's opinion as he does! but yet I am as good a man as he, were I to tell my own story, and have equal credit given to it. But the devil should have had him before I had seen him on the account he came upon, had I thought I should not have answered my principal end in it. I hinted to thee in my last what that was.

But to the particulars of the conference between my fair one and me, on her hasty messages; which I was loth to come to, because she has had a half triumph over me in it.

After I had attended the Captain down to the very passage, I returned to the dining-room, and put on a joyful air, on my beloved's entrance into it—Oh, my dearest creature, said I, let me congratulate you on a prospect so agreeable to your wishes! And I snatched her hand, and smothered it with kisses.

I was going on; when interrupting me, You see, Mr. Lovelace, said she, how you have embarrassed yourself by your obliquities! You see that you have not been able to return a direct answer to a plain and honest question, though upon it depends all the happiness, on the prospect of which you congratulate me!

You know, my best love, what my prudent, and I will say, my *kind* motives were, for giving out that we were married. You see that I have taken no advantage of it;

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and that no inconvenience has followed it. You see that your uncle wants only to be assured from ourselves *that it is so*——

Not another word on this subject, Mr. Lovelace. I will not only risk, but I will forfeit the reconciliation so near my heart, rather than I will go on to countenance a story so untrue!

My dearest soul—would you have me appear——

I would have you appear, sir, as *you are!* I am resolved that I will appear to my uncle's friend, and to my uncle, as I *am*.

For one week, my dearest life! cannot you for one week —only till the settlements——

Not for one hour, with my own consent. You don't know, sir, how much I have been afflicted, that I have appeared to the people below what I am not. But my uncle, sir, shall never have it to upbraid me, nor will I to upbraid myself, that I have wilfully passed upon him in false lights.

What, my dear, would you have me say to the Captain to-morrow morning? I have given him room to think——

Then put him right, Mr. Lovelace. Tell the truth. Tell him what you please of the favour of your relations to me: tell him what you will about the settlements: and if, when drawn, you will submit them to his perusal and approbation, it will show him how much you are in earnest.

My dearest life!—Do you think that he would disapprove of the terms I have offered?

No.

Then may I be accursed, if I willingly submit to be trampled under foot by my enemies!

And may I, Mr. Lovelace, never be happy in this life, if I submit to the passing upon my uncle Harlowe a wilful and premeditated falsehood for truth! I have too long laboured under the affliction which the rejection of all my friends has given me, to purchase my reconciliation with them now at so dear a price as that of my veracity.

The women below, my dear——

What are the women below to me?—I want not to

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establish myself with them. Need they know all that passes between my relations and you and me?

Neither are they anything to me, Madam. Only that when, for the sake of preventing the fatal mischiefs which might have attended your brother's projects, I have made them think us married, I would not appear to them in a light which you yourself think so shocking. By my soul, Madam, I had rather die than contradict myself so flagrantly, after I have related to them so many circumstances of our marriage.

Well, sir, the women may believe what they please. That I have given countenance to what you told them is my error. The many circumstances which you own *one* untruth has drawn you in to relate, is a justification of my refusal in the present case.

Don't you see, Madam, that your uncle wishes to find that we are married? May not the ceremony be privately over before his mediation can take place?

Urge this point no further, Mr. Lovelace. If *you* will not tell the truth, *I* will to-morrow morning (if I see Captain Tomlinson) tell it myself. Indeed I will.

Will you, Madam, consent that things pass as before with the people below? This mediation of Tomlinson *may* come to nothing. Your brother's schemes *may* be pursued; the rather, that now he will know (perhaps from your uncle) that you are not under a legal protection.—You will, at least, consent that things pass *here* as before?

To permit this, is to go on in an error, Mr. Lovelace. But as the occasion for so doing (if there *can* be in your opinion an occasion that will warrant an untruth) will, as I presume, soon be over, I shall the less dispute that point with you. But a new error I will not be guilty of, if I can avoid it.

Can I, do you think, Madam, have any dishonourable view in the step I supposed you would not scruple to take towards a reconciliation with your own family? Not for *my own* sake, you know, did I wish you to take it; for what is it to me, if I am never reconciled to your family? I want no favours from them.

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I hope, Mr. Lovelace, there is no occasion, in our present *not* disagreeable situation, to answer such a question. And let me say that I shall think my prospects still more agreeable, if to-morrow morning you will not only own the very truth, but give my uncle's friend such an account of the steps you have taken, and are taking, as may keep up my uncle's favourable intentions towards me. This you may do under what restrictions of secrecy you please. Captain Tomlinson is a prudent man; a promoter of family peace, you find; and I daresay may be made a friend.

I saw there was no help. I saw that the inflexible Harlowe spirit was all up in her.—A little witch!—A little—Forgive me, Love, for calling her names! And so I said, with an air, We have had too many misunderstandings, Madam, for me to wish for new ones: I will obey you without reserve. Had I not thought I should have obliged you by the other method (especially as the ceremony might have been over before anything could have operated from your uncle's intentions, and of consequence no untruth persisted in), I would not have proposed it. But think not, my beloved creature, that you shall enjoy, without condition, this triumph over my judgment.

And then, clasping my arms about her, I gave her averted cheek (her charming lip designed) a fervent kiss.—And your forgiveness of this sweet freedom [bowing] is that condition.

She was not mortally offended. And now must I make out the rest as well as I can. But this I will tell thee, that although her triumph has not diminished my love for her, yet it has stimulated me more than ever to *revenge*, as thou wilt be apt to call it. But *victory*, or *conquest*, is the more proper word.

There is a pleasure, 'tis true, in subduing one of these watchful beauties. But by my soul, Belford, men of our cast take twenty times the pains to be rogues that it would cost them to be honest; and dearly, with the sweat of our brows, and to the puzzling of our brains (to say nothing of the hazards we run), do we earn our purchase; and ought

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not therefore to be grudged our success when we meet with it—especially as, when we have obtained our end, satiety soon follows; and leaves us little or nothing to show for it. But this, indeed, may be said of all worldly delights.—And is not that a grave reflection from me?

I was willing to write up to the time. Although I have not carried my principal point, I shall make something turn out in my favour from Captain Tomlinson's errand. But let me give thee this caution; that thou do not pretend to judge of my devices by *parts;* but have patience till thou seest the *whole.* But once more I swear, that I will not be *out-Norrised* by a pair of novices. And yet I am very apprehensive, at times, of the consequences of Miss Howe's smuggling scheme.

My conscience, I should think, ought not to reproach me for a contrivance which is justified by the contrivances of two such girls as these: one of whom (the more excellent of the two) I have always, with her own approbation, as I imagine, proposed for my imitation.

But here, Jack, is the thing that concludes me, and cases my heart with adamant: I find, by Miss Howe's letters, that it is owing to *her* that I have made no greater progress with my blooming fair one. She loves me. The ipecacuanha contrivance convinces me that she loves me. Where there is love there must be confidence, or a desire of having *reason* to confide. Generosity, founded on my supposed generosity, has taken hold of her heart. Shall I not now see (since I must be for ever unhappy, if I marry her, and leave any trial unessayed) what I can make of her love, and her newly-raised confidence?—Will it not be to my glory to succeed? And to hers and to the honour of her sex, if I cannot?—Where then will be the hurt to either, to make the trial? And cannot I, as I have often said, reward her when I will by marriage?

'Tis late, or rather early; for the day begins to dawn upon me. I am plaguy heavy. Perhaps I need not to have told thee that. But will only indulge a doze in my chair for an hour; then shake myself, wash and refresh.

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At my time of life, with such a constitution as I am blessed with, that's all that's wanted.

Good-night to me!—It cannot be broad day till I am awake.—Aw-w-w-whaugh—pox of this yawning!

Is not thy uncle dead yet?

What's come to mine, that he writes not to my last?—Hunting after more *wisdom of nations,* I suppose!—Yaw-yaw-yawning again!—Pen, begone!

—o—

LETTER XLII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Monday, May 29.

Now have I established myself for ever in my charmer's heart.

The Captain came at seven, as promised, and ready equipped for his journey. My beloved chose not to give us her company till our first conversation was over—ashamed, I suppose, to be present at that part of it which was to restore her to her *virgin state* by my confession, after her *wifehood* had been reported to her uncle. But she took her cue, nevertheless, and listened to all that passed.

The modestest women, Jack, must *think,* and think deeply sometimes. I wonder whether they ever blush at those things by themselves, at which they have so charming a knack of blushing in company. If not; and if blushing be a sign of grace or modesty; have not the sex as great a command over their blushes as they are said to have over their tears? This reflection would lead me a great way into female minds, were I disposed to pursue it.

I told the Captain that I would prevent his question; and accordingly (after I had enjoined the strictest secrecy, that no advantage might be given to James Harlowe, and which he answered for as well on Mr. Harlowe's part as his own) I acknowledged nakedly and fairly the whole truth —to wit, 'That we were not yet married. I gave him hints

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'of the causes of procrastination. Some of them owing to 'unhappy misunderstandings: but chiefly to the lady's 'desire of previous reconciliation with her friends; and to 'a delicacy that had no example.'

Less nice ladies than this, Jack, love to have delays, wilful and *studied* delays, *imputed to them* in these cases—yet are indelicate in their affected delicacy. For do they not thereby tacitly confess that they expect to be the greatest gainers in wedlock: and that there is *self-denial* in the pride they take in delaying?

'I told him the reason of our passing to the people below 'as married—yet as under a vow of restriction, as to con- 'summation, which had kept us both to the height, one of '*forbearing*, the other of *vigilant* punctilio; even to the 'denial of those innocent freedoms which betrothed lovers 'never scruple to allow and to take.

'I then communicated to him a copy of my proposal of 'settlement; the substance of her written answer; the con- 'tents of my letter of invitation to Lord M. to be her 'nuptial-father; and of my Lord's generous reply. But 'said that having apprehensions of delay from his infirmities, 'and my beloved choosing by all means (and that from 'principles of *unrequited* duty) a private solemnisation, I 'had written to excuse his Lordship's presence; and ex- 'pected an answer every hour.

'The settlements, I told him, were actually drawing by 'Counsellor Williams, of whose eminence he must have 'heard'——

He had.

'And of the truth of this he might satisfy himself before 'he went out of town.

'When these were drawn, approved, and engrossed, 'nothing, I said, but signing, and the nomination of my 'happy day, would be wanting. I had a pride, I declared, 'in doing the highest justice to so beloved a creature, of 'my own voluntary motion, and without the intervention 'of a family from whom I had received the greatest insults. 'And this being our present situation, I was contented that

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'Mr. John Harlowe should suspend his reconciliatory purposes 'till our marriage were actually solemnised.'

The Captain was highly delighted with all I said: yet owned that as his dear friend Mr. Harlowe had expressed himself greatly pleased to hear that we were actually married, he could have wished it had been so. But, nevertheless, he doubted not that all would be well.

He saw my reasons, he said, and approved of them, for making the gentlewomen below [whom again he *understood to be good sort of people*] believe that the ceremony had passed; which so well accounted for what the lady's maid had told Mr. Harlowe's friend. Mr. James Harlowe, he said, had certainly ends to answer in keeping open the breach; and *as* certainly *had formed a design to get his sister out of my hands.* Wherefore it as much imported his worthy friend to keep this treaty a secret, as it did me; at least till he had formed his party, and taken his measures. Ill will and passion were dreadful misrepresenters. It was amazing to him, that animosity could be carried so high against a man capable of views so pacific and so honourable, and who had shown such a command of his temper, in this whole transaction, as I had done. Generosity, indeed, in every case, where love of stratagem and intrigue (I would excuse him) were not concerned, was a part of my character.

He was proceeding, when, breakfast being ready, in came the empress of my heart, irradiating all around her, as with a glory—a benignity and graciousness in her aspect, that, though natural to it, had been long banished from it.

Next to prostration lowly bowed the Captain. Oh, how the sweet creature smiled her approbation of him! Reverence from one begets reverence from another. Men are more of monkeys in imitation than they think themselves.—Involuntarily, in a manner, I bent my knee—My dearest life—and made a very fine speech on presenting the Captain to her. No title myself, to her lip or cheek, 'tis well *he* attempted not either. He was indeed ready to worship her;—could only touch her charming hand.

I have told the Captain, my dear creature—and then I

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briefly repeated (as if I had supposed she had not heard it) all I had told him.

He was astonished that anybody could be displeased one moment with such an angel. He undertook her cause as the highest degree of merit to himself.

Never, I must need say, did the angel so much *look* the angel. All placid, serene, smiling, self-assured: a more lovely flush than usual heightening her natural graces, and adding charms, even to radiance, to her charming complexion.

After we had seated ourselves, the agreeable subject was renewed, as we took our chocolate. How happy should she be in her uncle's restored favour!

The Captain engaged for it—No more delays, he hoped, on *her* part! Let the happy day be but *once* over, all would then be right. But was it improper to ask for copies of my proposals, and of her answer, in order to show them to his dear friend, her uncle?

As Mr. Lovelace pleased.—Oh, that the dear creature would always say so!

It must be in strict confidence then, I said. But would it not be better to show her uncle the draught of the settlements, when drawn?

And will you *be so good* as to allow of this, Mr. Lovelace?

There, Belford! We were once *the quarrelsome*, but now we are *the polite lovers.*

Indeed, my dear creature, I will, *if you desire it*, and if Captain Tomlinson will engage that Mr. Harlowe shall keep them absolutely a secret; that I may not be subjected to the cavil and control of any others of a family that have used me so very ill.

Now, indeed, sir, you are very obliging.

Dost think, Jack, that my face did not now also shine?

I held out my hand (first consecrating it with a kiss), for hers. *She condescended to give it me.* I pressed it to my lips: You know not, Captain Tomlinson (with an air), all storms overblown, what a happy man——

Charming couple! [his hands lifted up] how will my

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good friend rejoice! Oh, that he were present! You know not, Madam, how dear you still are to your uncle Harlowe!

I am unhappy ever to have disobliged him!

Not too much of that, however, fairest, thought I!

The Captain repeated his resolutions of service, and that in so acceptable a manner, that the dear creature wished that neither he, nor any of his, might ever want a friend of equal benevolence.

Nor any of his, she said; for the Captain brought it in that he had five children living, by one of the best wives and mothers, whose excellent management made him as happy as if his eight hundred pounds a year (which was all he had to boast of) were two thousand.

Without economy, the oraculous lady said, *no* estate was large enough. *With* it, the *least* was not too small.

Lie still, teasing villain! lie still.—I was only speaking to my conscience, Jack.

And let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, said the Captain; yet not so much from doubt, as that I may proceed upon sure grounds—You are *willing* to co-operate with my dear friend in a general reconciliation?

Let me tell you, Mr. Tomlinson, that if it can be distinguished that my readiness to make up with a family, of whose generosity I have not had reason to think highly, is entirely owing to the value I have for this angel of a woman, I will not only co-operate with Mr. John Harlowe, as you ask; but I will meet Mr. James Harlowe, senior, and his lady, *all the way.* And furthermore, to make the son James and his sister Arabella quite easy, I will absolutely disclaim any further interest, whether living or dying, in any of the three brothers' estates; contenting myself with what my beloved's grandfather has bequeathed to her: for I have reason to be abundantly satisfied with my own circumstances and prospects—enough rewarded, were she not to bring a shilling in dowry, in a woman who has a merit superior to all the goods of fortune.—True as the Gospel, Belford!—Why had not this scene a real foundation?

The dear creature, by her eyes, expressed her gratitude,

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before her lips could utter it. O Mr. Lovelace, said she—you have infinitely——and there she stopped.

The Captain run over in my praise. He was really affected.

Oh, that I had not such *a mixture of revenge and pride in my love,* thought I!—But (my old plea) cannot I make her amends at any time? And is not her virtue now in the height of its probation?—Would she lay aside, like the friends of my uncontending Rosebud, all thoughts of defiance—would she throw herself upon my mercy, and try me but one fortnight in the life of honour—What then?—*I cannot say, what then—*

Do not despise me, Jack, for my inconsistency—in no two letters perhaps agreeing with myself.—Who expects consistency in men of our character?—But I am mad with love—fired by revenge—puzzled with my own devices—my invention is my curse—my pride my punishment—drawn five or six ways at once, can *she* possibly be so unhappy as *I*?—Oh why, why, was this woman so divinely excellent!—Yet how know I that she is? What have been her trials? Have I had the courage to make a single one upon her *person,* though a thousand upon her *temper?*—Enow, I hope, to make her afraid of ever disobliging me more!

I MUST banish reflection, or I am a lost man. For these two hours past have I hated myself for my own contrivances. And this not only from what I *have* related to thee; but from what I have *further* to relate. But I have now once more steeled my heart. My vengeance is uppermost; *for I have been reperusing some of Miss Howe's virulence.* The contempt they have both held me in I cannot bear.

The happiest breakfast-time, my beloved owned, that she had ever known *since she had left her father's house.* [*She might have let this alone.*] The Captain renewed all his protestations of service. He would write me word how his dear friend received the account he should give him of the happy situation of our affairs, and what he thought of the settlements, as soon as I should send him the draughts

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so kindly promised. And we parted with great professions of mutual esteem; my beloved putting up vows for the success of his generous mediation.

When I returned from attending the Captain downstairs, which I did to the outward door, my beloved met me as I entered the dining-room; complacency reigning in every lovely feature.

'You see me already,' said she, 'another creature. You 'know not, Mr. Lovelace, how near my heart this hoped-for 'reconciliation is. I am now willing to banish every dis- 'agreeable remembrance. You know not, sir, how much 'you have obliged me. And oh, Mr. Lovelace, how happy 'shall I be, when my heart is lightened from the all-sinking 'weight of a father's curse! When my dear mamma—you 'don't know, sir, half the excellences of my dear mamma! 'and what a kind heart she has, when it is left to follow its 'own impulses—when this blessed mamma shall once more 'fold me to her indulgent bosom! When I shall again have 'uncles and aunts, and a brother and sister, all striving who 'shall show most kindness and favour to the poor outcast, 'then *no more* an outcast—And you, Mr. Lovelace, to 'behold all this, and to be received into a family so dear to 'me, with welcome—What though a little cold at first? 'When they come to know you better, and to see you 'oftener, no fresh causes of disgust occurring, and you, as I 'hope, having entered upon a new course, all will be warmer 'and warmer love on both sides, till every one will perhaps 'wonder how they came to set themselves against you.'

Then drying her tears with her handkerchief, after a few moments pausing, on a sudden, as if recollecting that she had been led by her joy to an expression of it which she had not intended I should see, she retired to her chamber with precipitation; leaving me almost as unable to stand it as herself.

In short, I was—I want words to say how I was—my nose had been made to tingle before; my eyes have before been made to glisten by this soul-moving beauty; but so *very* much affected, I never was—for, trying to check my

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sensibility, it was too strong for me, and I even sobbed—Yes, by my soul, I *audibly* sobbed, and was forced to turn from her before she had well finished her affecting speech.

I want, methinks, now I have owned the odd sensation, to describe it to thee—the thing was so strange to me—something choking, as it were, in my throat—I know not how—yet, I must needs say, though I am out of countenance upon the recollection, that there was something very pretty in it; and I wish I could know it again, that I might have a more perfect idea of it, and be better able to describe it to thee.

But this effect of her joy on such an occasion gives me a high notion of what that virtue must be [What other name can I call it?], which in a mind so capable of delicate transport, should be able to make so charming a creature, in her very bloom, all frost and snow to every advance of love from the man she hates not. This must be all from education too—must it not, Belford? Can *education* have stronger force in a woman's heart than *nature?*—Sure it cannot. But if it can, how entirely right are parents to cultivate their daughters' minds, and to inspire them with notions of reserve and distance to our sex; and indeed to make them think highly of their own! for pride is an excellent substitute, let me tell thee, where virtue shines not out, as the sun, in its own unborrowed lustre.

LETTER XLIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

And now it is time to confess (and yet I know that thy conjectures are aforehand with my exposition) that this Captain Tomlinson, who is so great a favourite with my charmer, and who takes so much delight in healing breaches, and reconciling differences, is neither a greater man nor a less than honest Patrick M'Donald, attended by a discarded footman of his own finding out.

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Thou knowest what a various-lifed rascal he is; and to what better hopes born and educated. But that ingenious knack of forgery, for which he was expelled the Dublin University, and a detection since in evidenceship, have been his ruin. For these have thrown him from one country to another; and at last into the way of life which would make him a fit husband for Miss Howe's Townsend with her contrabands. He is, thou knowest, admirably qualified for any enterprise that requires adroitness and solemnity. And can there, after all, be a higher piece of justice, than to keep one smuggler in readiness to play against another?

'Well, but, Lovelace (methinks thou questionest), how 'camest thou to venture upon such a contrivance as this, 'when, as thou hast told me, the lady used to be a month 'at a time at this uncle's; and must therefore, in all pro- 'bability, know that there was not a Captain Tomlinson 'in all the neighbourhood, at least no one of the name so 'intimate with him as this man pretends to be?'

This objection, Jack, is so natural a one, that I could not help observing to my charmer that she must surely have heard her uncle speak of this gentleman. No, she said, she never had. Besides she had not been at her uncle Harlowe's for near ten months [*this I had heard her say before*]: and there were several gentlemen who used the same green, whom she knew not.

We are all very ready, thou knowest, to believe what she likes.

And what was the reason, thinkest thou, that she had not been of so long a time at this uncle's?—Why, this old sinner, who imagines himself entitled to call me to account for my freedoms with the sex, has lately fallen into familiarities, as it is suspected, with his housekeeper; who assumes airs upon it.—A cursed deluding sex!—In youth, middle age, or dotage, they take us all in.

Dost thou not see, however, that this housekeeper knows nothing, nor is to know anything, of the treaty of reconciliation designed to be set on foot; and therefore the uncle always comes to the Captain, the Captain goes not

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to the uncle? And this I surmised to the lady. And then it was a natural suggestion that the Captain was the rather applied to, as he is a stranger to the rest of the family. Need I tell thee the meaning of all this?

But this intrigue of the *antient* is a piece of private history, the truth of which my beloved cares not to own, and indeed affects to disbelieve: as she does also some puisny gallantries of her foolish brother; which, by way of recrimination, I have hinted at, without naming my informant in their family.

'Well but, methinks, thou questionest again, Is it not 'probable that Miss Howe will make inquiry after such a 'man as Tomlinson?—And when she cannot'——

I know what thou wouldst say—but I have no doubt that Wilson will be so good, if I desire it, as to give into my own hands any letter that may be brought by Collins to his house, for a week to come. And now I hope thou art satisfied.

I will conclude with a short story.

'Two neighbouring sovereigns were at war together, 'about some pitiful chuck-farthing thing or other; no 'matter what; *for the least trifles will set princes and 'children at loggerheads.* Their armies had been drawn 'up in battalia some days, and the news of a decisive 'action was expected every hour to arrive at each court. 'At last, issue was joined; a bloody battle was fought; 'and a fellow who had been a spectator of it, arriving, 'with the news of a complete victory, at the capital of one 'of the princes some time before the appointed couriers, 'the bells were set a ringing, bonfires and illuminations 'were made, and the people went to bed intoxicated with 'joy and good liquor. But the next day all was reversed: 'the victorious enemy, pursuing his advantage, was expected 'every hour at the gates of the almost defenceless capital. 'The first reporter was hereupon sought for, and found; 'and being questioned, pleaded a great deal of merit, in that 'he had, in so dismal a situation, taken such a space of time 'from the distress of his fellow-citizens, and given it to

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'festivity, as were the hours between the false good news 'and the real bad.'

Do thou, Belford, make the application. This I know, that I have given greater joy to my beloved than she had thought would so soon fall to her share. And as the human life is properly said to be chequer-work, no doubt but a person of her prudence will make the best of it, and set off so much good against so much bad, in order to strike as just a balance as possible.

[The lady, in three several letters, acquaints her friend with the most material passages and conversations contained in those of Mr. Lovelace preceding. These are her words, on relating what the commission of the pretended Tomlinson was, after the apprehensions that his distant inquiry had given her:]

At last, my dear, all these doubts and fears were cleared up and banished; and, in their place, a delightful prospect was opened to me. For it comes happily out (but at present it must be an absolute secret, for reasons which I shall mention in the sequel) that the gentleman was sent by my uncle Harlowe [I thought he could not be angry with me for ever]: all owing to the conversation that passed between your good Mr. Hickman and him. For although Mr. Hickman's application was too harshly rejected at the time, my uncle could not but think better of it afterwards, and of the arguments that worthy gentleman used in my favour.

Who, upon a passionate repulse, would despair of having a reasonable request granted?—Who would not, by gentleness and condescension, endeavour to leave favourable impressions upon an angry mind; which, when it comes coolly to reflect, may induce it to work itself into a condescending temper? To request a favour, as I have often said, is one thing; to challenge it as our due, is another. And what right has a petitioner to be angry at a *repulse*, if he has not a right to *demand* what he sues for as a *debt*?

[She describes Captain Tomlinson, on his breakfast visit,

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to be *a grave, good sort of a man.* And in another place, *a genteel man of great gravity, and a good aspect; she believes upwards of fifty years of age.* '*I liked him,*' says she, '*as soon as I saw him.*'

As her prospects are now, as she says, more favourable than heretofore, she wishes *that her hopes of Mr. Lovelace's so often promised reformation were better grounded than she is afraid they can be.*]

We have both been extremely puzzled, my dear, says she, to reconcile some parts of Mr. Lovelace's character with other parts of it: his good with his bad; such of the former, in particular, as his generosity to his tenants; his bounty to the innkeeper's daughter; his readiness to put me upon doing kind things by my good Norton, and others.

A strange mixture in his mind, as I have told him! for he is certainly (as I have reason to say, looking back upon his past behaviour to me in twenty instances) *a hard-hearted man.*— Indeed, my dear, *I have thought more than once that he had rather see me in tears than give me reason to be pleased with him.*

My cousin Morden says that free livers are remorseless.* And so they must be in the very nature of things.

Mr. Lovelace is a proud man. We have both long ago observed that he is. And I am truly afraid that his very generosity is more owing to his *pride* and his *vanity*, than that *philanthropy* (shall I call it?) which distinguishes a beneficent mind.

Money he values not, but as a mean to support his pride and his independence. And it is easy, as I have often thought, for a person to part with a *secondary* appetite, when, by so doing, he can promote or gratify a *first.*

I am afraid, my dear, that there must have been some fault in his education. His natural bias was not, I fancy, sufficiently attended to. He was instructed perhaps (as his power was likely to be large) to do good and beneficent actions; but not, I doubt, from proper *motives.*

* See Letter XCVI. of volume ii. See also Mr. Lovelace's own confession of the delight he takes in a woman's tears, in different parts of his letters.

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If he *had*, his generosity would not have stopt at pride, but would have struck into *humanity;* and then would he not have contented himself with doing praiseworthy things by fits and starts, or, as if relying on the doctrine of merits, he hoped by a good action to atone for a bad one;* but he would have been uniformly noble, and done the good for its *own* sake.

Oh, my dear! what a lot have I drawn! *pride*, this poor man's *virtue;* and *revenge*, his other predominating quality. —This one consolation, however, remains:—he is not an infidel, and unbeliever: had he been an *infidel*, there would have been no room at all for hope of him (but priding himself, as he does, in his fertile invention); he would have been utterly abandoned, irreclaimable, and a savage.

[When she comes to relate those occasions which Mr. Lovelace in his narrative acknowledges himself to be affected by, she thus expresses herself:]

He endeavoured, as once before, to conceal his emotion. But why, my dear, should these men (for Mr. Lovelace is not singular in this) think themselves above giving these beautiful proofs of a feeling heart? Were it in my power again to choose, or to refuse, I would reject the man with contempt, who sought to suppress, or offered to deny, the power of being visibly affected upon *proper* occasions, as

* That the lady judges rightly of him in this place, see vol. i. Letter XXXIV. where, giving the motive for his generosity to his Rosebud, he says —'As I make it my rule, whenever I have committed a very capital enormity, 'to do some good by way of atonement; and as I believe I am a pretty deal 'indebted on that score; I intend to join a hundred pounds to Johnny's 'aunt's hundred pounds, to make one innocent couple happy.'—Besides which motive, he had a further view to answer in that instance of his generosity; as may be seen in vol. i. Letters LXX. LXXI. LXXII. See also the note, vol. i. page 442.

To show the consistence of his actions, as they now appear, with his views and principles, as he lays them down in his *first letters*, it may be not amiss to refer the reader to his letters, vol. i. No. XXXIV. XXXV.

See also vol. i. Letter XXX.—and Letter XL. for Clarissa's early opinion of Mr. Lovelace.—Whence the coldness and indifference to him, which he so repeatedly accuses her of, will be accounted for, more to *her* glory, than to *his* honour.

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either a savage-hearted creature, or as one who was so ignorant of the principal glory of the human nature, as to place his pride in a barbarous insensibility.

These lines translated from Juvenal by Mr. Tate, I have been often pleased with:

> Compassion *proper* to *mankind* appears:
> Which Nature witnessed, when she lent us tears.
> Of tender sentiments WE only give
> These proofs: To weep is OUR prerogative:
> To show by pitying looks, and melting eyes,
> How with a suffering friend we sympathise.
> Who can all sense of other ills escape,
> Is but a brute at best, in human shape.

It cannot but yield me some pleasure, hardly as I have sometimes thought of the people of the house, that such a good man as Captain Tomlinson had spoken well of them, upon inquiry.

And here I stop a minute, my dear, to receive, in fancy, your kind congratulation.

My next, I hope, will confirm my present, and open still more agreeable prospects. Meantime be assured that there cannot possibly any good fortune befal me, which I shall look upon with equal delight to that I have in your friendship.

My thankful compliments to your good Mr. Hickman, to whose kind invention I am so much obliged on this occasion, conclude me, my dearest Miss Howe,

Your ever affectionate and grateful

CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XLIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, May 30.

I HAVE a letter from Lord M. Such a one as I would wish for, if I intended matrimony. But as matters are circumstanced, I cannot think of showing it to my beloved.

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My Lord regrets 'that he is not to be the lady's 'nuptial father. He seems apprehensive that I have still, 'specious as my reasons are, some mischief in my head.'

He graciously consents 'that I may marry when I 'please; and offers one or both of my cousins to assist my 'bride, and to support her spirits on the occasion; since as 'he understands, she is so much afraid to venture with me.

'Pritchard, he tells me, has his final orders to draw up 'deeds for assigning over to me, in perpetuity, 1000*l. per* '*annum;* which he will execute the same hour that the 'lady in person owns her marriage.'

He consents 'that the jointure be made from my own 'estate.'

He wishes 'that the lady would have accepted of his 'draught; and commends me for tendering it to her. 'But reproaches me for my pride in not keeping it myself. '*What the right side gives up, the left,* he says, *may be* '*the better for.*'

The girls, the *left-sided* girls, he means.

With all my heart if I can have my Clarissa, the devil take everything else.

A good deal of other stuff writes the stupid peer; scribbling in several places half a dozen lines, apparently for no other reason but to bring in as many musty words in an old saw.

If thou askest, 'How I can manage, since my beloved 'will wonder that I have not an answer from my Lord to 'such a letter as I wrote to him; and if I own I have one, 'will expect that I should show it to her, as I did my 'letter?'—This I answer—'That I can be informed by 'Pritchard that my Lord has the gout in his right hand; 'and has ordered him to attend me in form, for my 'particular orders about the transfer.' And I can see Pritchard, thou knowest, at the King's Arms, or wherever I please, *at an hour's warning; though he be at M. Hall, I in town;* and he, by word of mouth, can acquaint me with everything in my Lord's letter *that is necessary for my charmer to know.*

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Whenever it suits me, *I can restore the old peer to his right hand*, and then can make him write a much more sensible letter than this that he has now sent me.

Thou knowest that an adroitness in the art of *manual imitation*, was one of my earliest attainments. It has been said, on this occasion, that had I been a *bad* man in *meum* and *tuum* matters, I should not have been fit to live. As to the girls, we hold it no sin to cheat them. And are we not told, that in being *well deceived* consists the whole of human happiness?

—o—

Wednesday, May 31.

All still happier and happier. A very high honour done me: a chariot, instead of a coach, permitted, purposely to indulge me in the subject of subjects.

Our discourse in this sweet airing turned upon our future manner of life. The day is bashfully promised me. *Soon* was the answer to my repeated urgency. Our equipage, our servants, our liveries, were part of the delightful subject. A desire that the wretch who had given me intelligence out of the family (honest Joseph Leman) might not be one of our menials; and her resolution to have her faithful Hannah, whether recovered or not, were signified; and both as readily assented to.

Her wishes, from my attentive behaviour, when with her at St. Paul's,* that I would often accompany her to the Divine Service, were gently intimated, and as readily engaged for. I assured her that I ever had respected the clergy in a body; and some individuals of them (her Dr. Lewen for one) highly: and that were not going to church an act of religion, I thought it [as I told thee once†] a most agreeable sight to see rich and poor, all of a *company*, as I might say, assembled once a week in one place, and each in his or her best attire, to worship the God that made them. Nor could it be a hardship upon a man liberally educated, to make *one* on so solemn an occasion, and to hear the harangue of a man of letters (though far from

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXII. † Ibid.

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being the principal part of the service, as it is too generally looked upon to be), whose studies having taken a different turn from his own, he must always have something new to say.

She shook her head, and repeated the word *new:* but looked as if willing to be satisfied for the present with this answer. To be sure, Jack, she means to do great despight to his Satanic majesty in her hopes of reforming me. No wonder, therefore, if he exerts himself to prevent her, and to be revenged. But how came this in!—I am ever of party against myself.—One day, I fancy, I shall hate myself on recollecting what I am about at this instant. But I must stay till then. We must all of us do something to repent of.

The reconciliation prospect was enlarged upon. If her uncle Harlowe will but pave the way to it, and if it can be brought about, she shall be happy.—Happy, with a sigh, *as it is now possible she can be!*

She won't forbear, Jack!

I told her that I had heard from Pritchard, just before we set out on our airing, and expected him in town to-morrow from Lord M. to take my directions. I spoke with gratitude of my Lord's kindness to me; and with pleasure of Lady Sarah's, Lady Betty's, and my two cousins Montague's veneration for her: as also of his lordship's concern that his gout hindered him from writing a reply *with his own hand* to my last.

She pitied my Lord. She pitied poor Mrs. Fretchville too; for she had the goodness to inquire after her. The dear creature pitied everybody that seemed to want pity. Happy in her own prospects, she had leisure to look abroad, and wishes everybody equally happy.

It is likely to go very hard with Mrs. Fretchville. Her face, which she had valued herself upon, will be utterly ruined. 'This good, however, as I could not but observe, 'she may reap from so great an evil—as the greater malady 'generally swallows up the less, she may have a grief on 'this occasion, that may diminish the other grief, and make 'it tolerable.'

I had a gentle reprimand for this light turn on so heavy

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an evil—'For what was the loss of beauty to the loss of a good husband?'—Excellent creature!

Her hopes (and her pleasure upon those hopes) that Miss Howe's mother would be reconciled to her, were also mentioned. *Good* Mrs. Howe was her word, for a woman so covetous, and so remorseless in her covetousness, that no one else will call her *good.* But this dear creature has such an extension in her love, as to be capable of valuing the most insignificant animal related to those whom she respects. *Love me, and love my dog,* I have heard Lord M. say.—Who knows, but that I may in time, in compliment to myself, bring her to think well of *thee,* Jack?

But what am I about? Am I not all this time arraigning my own heart?—I know I am, by the remorse I feel in it, while my pen bears testimony to her excellence. But yet I must add (for no selfish consideration shall hinder me from doing justice to this admirable creature) that in this conversation she demonstrated so much prudent knowledge in everything that relates to that part of the domestic management which falls under the care of a mistress of a family, that I believe she has no equal of her years in the world.

But indeed I know not the subject on which she does not talk with admirable distinction; insomuch that could I but get over my prejudices against matrimony, and resolve to walk in the dull beaten path of my ancestors, I should be the happiest of men—and if I cannot, perhaps I may be ten times more to be pitied than she.

My heart, my heart, Belford, *is not to be trusted.*—I break off to re-peruse some of Miss Howe's virulence.

CURSED letters, these of Miss Howe, Jack!—Do thou turn back to those of mine, where I take notice of them—I proceed—

Upon the whole, my charmer was all gentleness, all ease, all serenity, throughout this sweet excursion. Nor had she reason to be otherwise: for it being the first time that I had the honour of her company alone, I was resolved to encourage her, by my respectfulness, to *repeat the favour.*

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On our return, I found the counsellor's clerk waiting for me, with a draught of the marriage settlements.

They are drawn, with only the necessary variations, from those made for my mother. The original of which (now returned by the counsellor) as well as the new draughts, I have put into my beloved's hands.

These settlements of my mother made the lawyer's work easy; nor can she have a better precedent; the great Lord S. having settled them, at the request of my mother's relations; all the difference, my charmer's are 100*l. per annum* more than my mother's.

I offered to read to her the old deed, while she looked over the draught; for she had refused her presence at the examination with the clerk: but this she also declined.

I suppose she did not care to hear of so many children, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons, and as many daughters, *to be begotten upon the body of the said Clarissa Harlowe.*

Charming matrimonial recitativoes!—though it is always said *lawfull begotten* too—as if a man could beget children *unlawfully* upon the body of his own wife.—But thinkest thou not that these arch rogues the lawyers hereby intimate that a man may have children by his wife *before* marriage? —This must be what they mean. Why will these sly fellows put an honest man in mind of such rogueries?—but hence, as in numberless other instances, we see that *law* and *gospel* are two very different things.

Dorcas, in our absence, tried to get at the wainscot box in the dark closet. But it cannot be done without violence. And to run a risk of consequence *now*, for mere curiosity sake, would be inexcusable.

Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs are all of opinion that I am now so much a favourite, and have such a visible share in her confidence, and even in her affections, that I may do what I will, and plead for excuse violence of *passion*; which, they will have it, makes violence of *action* pardonable with their sex; as well as an *allowed extenuation* with the *unconcerned of both sexes;* and they all offer their helping hands.

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Why not? they say: has she not passed for my wife before them all?—And is she not in a fine way of being reconciled to her friends?—And was not the want of that reconciliation the pretence for postponing the consummation?

They again urge me, since it is so difficult to make *night* my friend, to an attempt in the *day*. They remind me that the situation of their house is such, that no noises can be heard out of it; and ridicule me for making it necessary for a lady to be undressed. *It was not always so with me,* poor old man! Sally told me; saucily flinging her handkerchief in my face.

—o—

LETTER XLV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday, June 2.

NOTWITHSTANDING my studied-for politeness and complaisance for some days past; and though I have wanted courage to throw the mask quite aside; yet I have made the dear creature more than once look about her, by the warm, though decent expression of my passion. I have brought her to own that I am *more* than indifferent with her: but as to LOVE, which I pressed her to acknowledge, *what need of acknowledgments of that sort, when a woman consents to marrying?*—And once repulsing me with displeasure, *the proof of true love I was vowing for her, was* RESPECT, *not* FREEDOM. And offering to defend myself, she told me that all the conception she had been able to form of a faulty passion, was, that it must demonstrate itself as mine sought to do.

I endeavoured to justify my passion, by laying over-delicacy at her door. Over-delicacy, she said, was not *my* fault, if it were *hers*. She must plainly tell me, that I appeared to her incapable of distinguishing what were the requisites of a pure mind. Perhaps, had the *libertine* presumption to imagine that there was no difference in *heart,* nor any but what proceeded from difference of *education*

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and *custom*, between the pure and impure—and yet custom *alone*, as she observed, if I *did* so think, would make a second nature, as well in *good* as in *bad* habits.

I HAVE just now been called to account for some innocent liberties which I thought myself entitled to take before the women; as they suppose us to be married, and now within view of consummation.

I took the lecture very hardly; and with impatience wished for the happy day and hour when I might call her all my own, and meet with no check from a niceness that had no example.

She looked at me with a bashful kind of contempt. I thought it *contempt*, and required the reason for it; not being conscious of offence, as I told her.

This is not the first time, Mr. Lovelace, said she, that I have had cause to be displeased with you, when *you*, perhaps, have not thought yourself exceptionable.—But, sir, let me tell you that the married state, in my eye, is a state of purity, and [I *think* she told me] not of *licentiousness*; so, at least, I understood her.

Marriage purity, Jack!—Very comical, 'faith—yet, sweet dears, half the female world ready to run away with a rake, *because* he is a rake; and for no *other* reason; nay, every other reason *against* their choice of such a one.

But have not you and I, Belford, seen young wives, who would be thought modest, and, when maids, were fantastically shy; permit freedoms in public from their uxorious husbands, which have shown that both of them have forgotten what belongs either to prudence or decency? while every modest eye has sunk under the shameless effrontery, and every modest face been covered with blushes for those who could *not* blush.

I once, upon such an occasion, proposed to a circle of a dozen, thus scandalised, to withdraw; since they must needs see that as well the *lady*, as the gentleman, wanted to be in private. This motion had its effect upon the amorous pair; and I was applauded for the check given to their licentiousness.

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But upon another occasion of this sort, I acted a little more in character. For I ventured to make an attempt upon a bride, which I should not have had the courage to make, had not the unblushing passiveness with which she received her fond husband's public toyings (looking round her with triumph rather than with shame, upon every lady present), incited my curiosity to know if the same complacency might not be shown to a private friend. 'Tis true, I was in honour obliged to keep the secret. But I never saw the turtles bill afterwards, but I thought of number two to the same female; and in my heart thanked the fond husband for the lesson he had taught his wife.

From what I have said, thou wilt see that I approve of my beloved's exception to *public* loves. That, I hope, is all the charming icicle means by *marriage purity*. But to return.

From the whole of what I have mentioned to have passed between my beloved and me, thou wilt gather that I have not been a mere dangler, a Hickman, in the passed days, though not absolutely active, and a Lovelace.

The dear creature now considers herself as my wife-elect. The *unsaddened* heart, no longer prudish, will not now, I hope, give the sable turn to every address of the man she dislikes not. And yet she must keep up so much reserve, as will justify past inflexibilities. 'Many and many a 'pretty soul would yield, were she not afraid that the man 'she favoured would think the worse of her for it.' This is also a part of the rake's creed. But should she resent ever so strongly, she cannot now break with me; since, if she does, there will be an end of the family reconciliation; and that in a way highly discreditable to herself.

—o—

Saturday, June 3.

JUST returned from Doctors Commons. I have been endeavouring to get a license. Very true, Jack. I have the mortification to find a difficulty, as the lady is of rank and fortune, and as there is no consent of father or *next friend*, in obtaining this *all-fettering* instrument.

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I made report of this difficulty. 'It is very right,' she says, 'that such difficulties should be made.'—But not to a man of my known fortune, surely, Jack, though the woman were the daughter of a duke.

I asked if she approved of the settlements? She said she had compared them with my mother's, and had no objection to them. She had written to Miss Howe upon the subject, she owned; and to inform her of our present situation.*

JUST now, in high good humour, my beloved returned me the draughts of the settlements: a copy of which I have sent to Captain Tomlinson. She complimented me, 'that 'she never had any doubt of my honour in cases of this 'nature.'

In matters between man and man nobody ever had, thou knowest.

I had need, thou wilt say, to have some good qualities.

Great faults and great virtues are often found in the same person. In nothing *very* bad, but as to women: and did not one of them begin with me.†

We have held that women have no souls. I am a very Turk in this point, and willing to believe they have not. And if so, to whom shall I be accountable for what I do to them? Nay, if souls they have, as there is no sex in etherials, nor need of any, what plea can a lady hold of injuries done her in her lady-*state*, when there is an end of her lady-*ship*?

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Monday, June 5.

I AM now almost in despair of succeeding with this charming frost-piece by love or gentleness.—A copy of the draughts, as I told thee, has been sent to Captain Tomlin-

* As this letter of the lady to Miss Howe contains no new matter, but what may be collected from those of Mr. Lovelace, it is omitted.

† See vol. i. Letter XXXI.

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son; and that by a special messenger. Engrossments are proceeding with. I have been again at the Commons.—Should in all probability have procured a license by Mallory's means, had not Mallory's friend, the proctor, been suddenly sent for to Cheshunt, to make an old lady's will. Pritchard has told me by word of mouth, *though my charmer saw him not*, all that was necessary for her to know in the letter my Lord wrote, which I could not show her: and taken my directions about the estates to be made over to me on my nuptials.—Yet, with all these favourable appearances, no conceding moment to be found, no improvable tenderness to be raised.

But never, I believe, was there so true, so delicate a modesty in the human mind as in that of this lady. And this has been my security all along; and in spite of Miss Howe's advice to her, will be so still; since, if her delicacy be a fault, she can no more overcome it than I can my aversion to matrimony. Habit, habit, Jack, seest thou not? may subject us both to weaknesses. And should she not have charity for me, as I have for her?

Twice indeed with rapture, which once she called rude, did I salute her; and each time resenting the freedom, did she retire; though, to do her justice, she favoured me again with her presence at my first entreaty, and took no notice of the cause of her withdrawing.

Is it policy to show so open a resentment for innocent liberties, which, in her situation, she must so soon forgive?

Yet the woman who resents not initiatory freedoms must be lost. For love is an encroacher. Love never goes backward. Love is always aspiring. Always *must* aspire. Nothing but the highest act of love can satisfy an indulged love. And what advantages has a lover, who values not breaking the peace, over his mistress who is solicitous to keep it!

I have now at this instant wrought myself up, for the dozenth time, to a half resolution. A thousand agreeable things I have to say to her. She is in the dining-room. Just gone up. She always expects me when there.

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HIGH displeasure!—followed by an abrupt departure.

I sat down by her. I took both her hands in mine. I would *have* it so. All gentle my voice. Her father mentioned with respect. Her mother with reverence. Even her brother amicably spoken of. I never thought I could have wished so ardently, as I told her I did wish, for a reconciliation with her family.

A sweet and grateful flush then overspread her fair face; a gentle sigh now and then heaved her handkerchief.

I perfectly longed to hear from Captain Tomlinson. It was impossible for the uncle to find fault with the draught of the settlements. I would not, however, be understood, by sending them down, that I intended to put it in her uncle's power to delay my happy day. When, when was it to be?

I would hasten again to the Commons; and would not return without the license.

The Lawn I proposed to retire to, as soon as the happy ceremony was over. This day and that day I proposed.

It was time enough to name the day, when the settlements were completed, and the license obtained. Happy should she be, could the kind Captain Tomlinson obtain her *uncle's presence privately*.

A good hint!—It may perhaps be improved upon—either for a *delay* or a *pacifier*.

No new delays, for Heaven's sake, I besought her; and reproached her gently for the past. Name but the day (an *early* day, I hoped it would be, in the following week)—that I might hail its approach, and number the tardy hours.

My cheek reclined on her shoulder—kissing her hands by turns. Rather bashfully than angrily reluctant, her hands sought to be withdrawn; her shoulder avoiding my reclined cheek—apparently loth, and more loth to quarrel with me; her downcast eye confessing more than her lips could utter. Now surely, thought I, is my time to try if she can forgive a still bolder freedom than I had ever yet taken.

I then gave her struggling hands liberty. I put one arm round her waist: I imprinted a kiss on her sweet lip, with a *Be quiet* only, and an averted face, as if she feared another.

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Encouraged by so gentle a repulse, the tenderest things I said; and then, with my other hand, drew aside the handkerchief that concealed the beauty of beauties, and pressed with my burning lips the most charming breast that ever my ravished eyes beheld.

A very contrary passion to that which gave her bosom so delightful a swell immediately took place. She struggled out of my encircling arms with indignation. I detained her reluctant hand. Let me go, said she. *I see there is no keeping terms with you.* Base encroacher! Is this the design of your flattering speeches? Far as matters have gone, I will for ever renounce you. You have an odious heart. Let me go, I tell you.

I was forced to obey, and she flung from me, repeating *base,* and adding, *flattering,* encroacher.

In vain have I urged by Dorcas for the promised favour of dining with her. She would not dine *at all.* She *could not.*

But why makes she every inch of her person thus sacred? —So near the time too, that she must suppose that all will be my own by deed of purchase and settlement?

She has read, no doubt, of the art of the eastern monarchs, who sequester themselves from the eyes of their subjects, in order to excite their adoration, when, upon some solemn occasions, they think fit to appear in public.

But let me ask thee, Belford, whether (on these solemn occasions) the preceding cavalcade; here a great officer, and there a great minister, with their satellites, and glaring equipages, do not prepare the eyes of the wondering beholders, by degrees, to bear the blaze of canopied majesty (what though but an ugly old man perhaps himself? yet) glittering in the collected riches of his vast empire?

And should not my beloved, for her own sake, descend, by *degrees,* from *goddess-hood* into *humanity!* If it be *pride* that restrains her, ought not that pride to be punished? If, as in the eastern emperors, it be *art* as well as *pride, art* is what she of all women need not use. If *shame,* what a

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shame to be ashamed to communicate to her adorer's sight the most admirable of her personal graces?

Let me perish, Belford, if I would not forego the brightest diadem in the world, for the pleasure of seeing a twin Lovelace at each charming breast, drawing from it his first sustenance; the pious task, for physical reasons,* continued for one month and no more!

I now, methinks, behold this most charming of women in this sweet office: her conscious eye now dropt on one, now on the other, with a sigh of maternal tenderness, and then raised up to my delighted eye, full of wishes, for the sake of the pretty varlets, and for her own sake, that I would deign to legitimate; that I would condescend to put on the nuptial fetters.

—o—

LETTER XLVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Monday Afternoon.

A LETTER received from the worthy Captain Tomlinson has introduced me into the presence of my charmer sooner than perhaps I should otherwise have been admitted.

Sullen her brow, at her first entrance into the dining-room. But I took no notice of what had passed, and her anger of itself subsided.

'The Captain, after letting me know that he chose not 'to write till he had promised the draught of the settlements, 'acquaints me that his friend Mr. John Harlowe, in their 'first conference (which was held as soon as he got down) 'was extremely surprised, and even grieved *(as he feared he 'would be)* to hear that we were not married. The world, 'he said, who knew my character, would be very censorious, 'were it owned that we had lived so long together unmar-

* In Pamela, vol. iii. Letter XLVIII., these reasons are given, and are worthy of every parent's consideration, as is the whole Letter, which contains the debate between Mr. B. and his Pamela, on the important subject of mothers being nurses to their own children.

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'ried in the same lodgings; although our marriage were 'now to be ever so publicly celebrated.

'His nephew James, he was sure, would make a great 'handle of it against any motion that might be made to-'wards a reconciliation; and with the greater success, as 'there was not a family in the kingdom more jealous of 'their honour than theirs.'

This is true of the Harlowes, Jack: they have been called *The proud Harlowes:* and I have ever found, that all *young honour* is supercilious and touchy.

But seest thou not how right I was in my endeavour to persuade my fair one to allow her uncle's friend to think us married; especially as he came *prepared* to believe it; and as her uncle *hoped* it was so?—But nothing on earth is so perverse as a woman, when she is set upon carrying a point, and has a *meek* man, or one who loves his *peace,* to deal with.

My beloved was vexed. She pulled out her handkerchief; but was more inclined to blame me than herself.

Had you kept your word, Mr. Lovelace, and left me when we came to town—and there she stopped; for she knew that it was her own fault that we were not married before we left the country; and how could I leave her *afterwards, while her brother was plotting to carry her off by violence?*

Nor has this brother yet given over his machinations.

For, as the Captain proceeds, 'Mr. John Harlowe owned 'to him (but in confidence) that his nephew is at this time 'busied in endeavouring to find out where we are; being 'assured (as I am not to be heard of at any of my relations, 'or at my usual lodgings) that we are together. And that 'we are not married is plain, as he will have it, *from Mr. 'Hickman's applications so lately made to her uncle; and 'which was seconded by Mrs. Norton to her mother.* And 'her brother cannot bear that I should enjoy such a triumph 'unmolested.'

A profound sigh, and the handkerchief again lifted to the eye. But did not the sweet soul deserve this turn upon her, for feloniously resolving to rob me of herself, had the application made by Hickman succeeded?

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I read on to the following effect:

'Why (asked Mr. Harlowe) was it said to his other in-
'quiring friend, that we *were* married; and that by his
'niece's woman, who ought to know? who could give con-
'vincing reasons, no doubt'——

Here again she wept; took a turn cross the room; then returned—Read on, says she—

Will you, my dearest life, read it yourself?

I will take the letter with me, by and by—I cannot *see* to read it just now, wiping her eyes—read on—let me hear it all—that I may know *your* sentiments upon this letter, as well as give *my own*.

'The Captain then told uncle John the reasons that
'induced me to give out that we were married; and the con-
'ditions on which my beloved was brought to countenance
'it; which had kept us at the most punctilious distance.

'But still Mr. Harlowe objected my character, and went
'away dissatisfied. And the Captain was also so much con-
'cerned, that he cared not to write what the result of his
'first conference was.

'But in the next, which was held on receipt of the
'draughts, at the Captain's house (as the former was, for
'the greater secrecy), when the old gentleman had read
'them, and had the Captain's opinion, he was much better
'pleased. And yet he declared that it would not be easy
'to persuade *any other* person of his family to believe so
'favourably of the matter, as he was *now* willing to believe,
'were they to know that we had lived so long together un-
'married.

'And then the Captain says, his dear friend made a pro-
'posal:—It was this—*That we should marry out of hand,*
'*but as privately as possible, as indeed he found we intended*
'(for he could have no objection to the draughts)—*but yet,*
'*he expected to have present one trusty friend of his own, for*
'*his better satisfaction*'——

Here I stopped, with a design to be angry—but she desiring me to read on, I obeyed.

'—*But that it should pass to every one living, except to that*

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'trusty person, to himself, and to the Captain, that we were 'married from the time that we had lived together in one 'house; and that this time should be made to agree with that 'of Mr. Hickman's application to him from Miss Howe.'

This, my dearest life, said I, is a very considerate proposal. We have nothing to do but to caution the people below properly on this head. I did not think your uncle Harlowe capable of hitting upon such a charming expedient as this. But you see how much his heart is in the reconciliation.

This was the return I met with—You have always, as a mark of your politeness, let me know how *meanly* you think of every one of my family.

Yet thou wilt think, Belford, that *I could forgive her for the reproach.*

'The Captain does not know, he says, how this proposal 'will be relished by us. But, for his part, he thinks it an 'expedient that will obviate many difficulties, and may 'possibly put an end to Mr. James Harlowe's further 'designs: and on this account he has, *by the uncle's advice,* 'already declared to two several persons, by whose means it 'may come to that young gentleman's, that he [Captain 'Tomlinson] has very great reason to believe that we were 'married soon after Mr. Hickman's application was rejected.

'And this, Mr. Lovelace (says the Captain), will enable 'you to pay a compliment to the family, that will not be 'unsuitable to the generosity of some of the declarations 'you were pleased to make to the lady before me (and 'which Mr. John Harlowe may make some advantage of 'in favour of a reconciliation), in that you have not de-'manded your lady's estate so soon as you were entitled to 'make the demand.' An excellent contriver, surely, she must think this worthy Mr. Tomlinson to be!

But the Captain adds, 'that if either the lady or I dis-'approve of his report of our marriage, he will retract it. 'Nevertheless, he must tell me, that Mr. John Harlowe is 'very much set upon this way of proceeding; as the only 'one, in his opinion, capable of being improved into a

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'general reconciliation. But if we do acquiesce in it, he 'beseeches my fair one not to suspend my day, that he may 'be authorised in what he says, as to the truth of the main 'fact. [*How conscientious this good man!*] Nor must it 'be expected, he says, that her uncle will take one step 'towards the wished-for reconciliation, till the *solemnity is* '*actually over.*'

He adds, 'that he shall be very soon in town on other 'affairs; and then proposes to attend us, and give us a more 'particular account of all that has passed, or shall further 'pass, between Mr. Harlowe and him.'

Well, my dearest life, what say you to your uncle's expedient? Shall I write to the Captain, and acquaint him that we have no objection to it?

She was silent for a few minutes. At last, with a sigh, See, Mr. Lovelace, said she, what you have brought me to, by treading after you in such crooked paths!—See what disgrace I have incurred!—Indeed you have not acted like a wise man.

My beloved creature, do you not remember how earnestly I besought the honour of your hand before we came to town?—Had I been *then* favoured——

Well, well, sir; there has been much amisss omewhere; that's all I will say at present. And since what's past cannot be recalled, my uncle must be obeyed, I think.

Charmingly dutiful!—I had nothing then to do, that I might not be behindhand with the worthy Captain and her uncle, but to press for the day. This I fervently did. But (as I might have expected) she repeated her former answer; to wit, That when the settlements were completed; when the license was actually obtained; it would be time enough to name the day: and, O Mr. Lovelace, said she, turning from me with a grace inimitably tender, her handkerchief at her eyes, what a happiness, if my dear uncle could be prevailed upon to be personally a father, on this occasion, to *the poor fatherless girl!*

What's the matter with me!—Whence this dew-drop!—A tear!—As I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack!—Very

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ready methinks!—Only on reciting!—But her lovely image was before me, in the very attitude she spoke the words—and indeed at the time she spoke them, these lines of Shakspeare came into my head:

> Thy heart is big. Get thee apart and weep!
> Passion, I see, is catching:—For my eye,
> Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
> Begin to water—

I withdrew, and wrote to the Captain to the following effect—'I desired that he would be so good as to acquaint 'his dear friend that we entirely acquiesced with what he 'had proposed; and had already *properly* cautioned the 'gentlewomen of the house, and their servants, as well as 'our own: and to tell him, That if he would in person give 'me the blessing of his dear niece's hand, it would crown 'the wishes of both. In this case, I consented that his own 'day, *as I presumed it would be a short one*, should be ours: 'that by this means the secret would be with fewer persons: 'that I myself, as well as he, thought the ceremony could 'not be too privately performed; and this not only for the 'sake of the wise end he had proposed to answer by it, but 'because I would not have Lord M. think himself slighted; 'since that nobleman, as I had told him [the Captain] had 'once intended to be our nuptial-father; and actually made 'the offer; but that we had declined to accept of it, and 'that for no other reason than to avoid a public wedding; 'which his beloved niece would not come into, while she 'was in disgrace with her friends. But that if he chose not 'to do us this honour, I wished that Captain Tomlinson 'might be the trusty person whom he would have to be 'present on the happy occasion.'

I showed this letter to my fair one. She was not displeased with it. So, Jack, we cannot now move too fast, as to settlements and license: the day is her *uncle's day*, or *Captain Tomlinson's*, perhaps, as shall best suit the occasion. Miss Howe's smuggling scheme is now surely provided against in all events.

But I will not by anticipation make thee a iudge of all

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the benefits that may flow from this my elaborate contrivance. Why will these girls put me upon my *masterstrokes?*

And now for a little mine which I am getting ready to spring. The *first* that I have sprung, and at the rate I go on (now a *resolution,* and now a *remorse*) perhaps the *last* that I shall attempt to spring.

A *little* mine, I call it. But it may be attended with great effects. I shall not, however, absolutely depend upon the success of it, having much more effectual ones in reserve. And yet great engines are often moved by small springs. A little spark falling by accident into a powder-magazine, hath done more execution in a siege than a hundred cannon.

Come the worst, the *hymeneal torch,* and a *white sheet,* must be my *amende honorable,* as the French have it.

—o—

LETTER XLVIII.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Tuesday, June 6.

UNSUCCESSFUL as hitherto my application to you has been, I cannot for the heart of me forbear writing once more in behalf of this admirable woman: and yet am unable to account for the zeal which impels me to take her part with an earnestness so sincere.

But all her merit thou acknowledgest; all thy own vileness thou confessest, and even gloriest in it. What hope then of moving so hardened a man?—Yet, as it is not too late, and thou art nevertheless upon the crisis, I am resolved to try what another letter will do. It is but my writing in vain, if it do no good; and if thou wilt let me prevail, I know thou wilt hereafter think me richly entitled to thy thanks.

To *argue* with thee would be folly. The case cannot require it. I will only *entreat* thee, therefore, that thou wilt not let such an excellence lose the reward of her vigilant virtue.

I believe there never were libertines so vile, but purposed, at some future period of their lives, to set about reforming:

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and let me beg of thee, that thou wilt, in this great article, make thy future repentance as easy as some time hence thou wilt wish thou *hadst* made it.

If thou proceedest, I have no doubt that this affair will end tragically, one way or other. It *must*. Such a woman must interest both gods and men in her cause. But what I most apprehend is, that with her own hand, in resentment of the perpetrated outrage, she (like another Lucretia) will assert the purity of her heart: or, if her piety preserve her from this violence, that wasting grief will soon put a period to her days. And, in either case, will not the remembrance of thy *ever-during* guilt, and *transitory* triumph, be a torment of torments to thee?

'Tis a seriously sad thing, after all, that so fine a creature should have fallen into such vile and remorseless hands: for, from thy cradle, as I have heard thee own, thou ever delightedst to sport with and torment the animal, whether bird or beast, that thou lovedst, and hadst a power over.

How different is the case of this fine woman from that of any other whom thou hast seduced!—I need not mention to thee, nor insist upon the striking difference: justice, gratitude, thy interest, thy vows, all engaging thee; and thou certainly loving her, as far as thou art capable of love, above all her sex. She not to be drawn aside by art, or to be made to suffer from credulity, nor for want of wit and discernment (that will be another cutting reflection to so fine a mind as hers:) the contention between you only unequal, as it is between naked innocence and armed guilt. In everything else, as thou ownest, her talents greatly superior to thine!—What a fate will hers be, if thou art not at last overcome by thy reiterated remorses!

At first, indeed, when I was admitted into her presence* (and till I observed her meaning air, and heard her speak), I supposed that she had no very uncommon *judgment* to boast of: for I made, as I thought, but *just* allowances for her blossoming youth, and for that loveliness of person, and for that ease and elegance in her dress, which I imagined must have

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXIV.

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taken up half her time and study to cultivate; and yet I had been prepared by thee to entertain a very high opinion of her sense and her reading. Her choice of this gay fellow, upon such hazardous terms (thought I), is a confirmation that her *wit* wants that maturity which only *years* and *experience* can give it. Her *knowledge* (argued I to myself) must be all *theory;* and the complaisance ever consorting with an age so green and so gay, will make so experienced a lady at least forbear to show herself *disgusted* at freedoms of discourse in which those present of her own sex, and some of ours (so learned, so well read, and so travelled), allow themselves.

In this presumption I ran on; and having the advantage, as I conceited, of all the company but you, and being desirous to appear in her eyes a mighty clever fellow, I thought I *showed away*, when I said any foolish things that had more sound than sense in them; and when I made silly jests, which attracted the smiles of thy Sinclair, and the specious Partington: and that Miss Harlowe did not smile too, I thought was owing to her youth or affectation, or to a mixture of both, perhaps to a greater command of her features.—Little dreamt I that I was incurring her contempt all the time.

But when, as I said, I heard her speak, which she did not till she had fathomed us all; when I heard her sentiments on two or three subjects, and took notice of that searching eye, darting into the very inmost cells of our frothy brains; by my faith, it made me look about me; and I began to recollect, and be ashamed of all I had said before; in short, was resolved to sit silent, till every one had talked round, to keep my folly in countenance. And then I raised the subjects that she *could* join in, and which she *did* join in, so much to the confusion and surprise of every one of us!—For even thou, Lovelace, so noted for smart wit, repartee, and a vein of raillery, that delighteth all who come near thee, sattest in palpable darkness, and lookedst about thee, as well as we.

One instance only of this shall I remind thee of.

We talked of *wit*, and of *wit*, and aimed at it, bandying it like a ball from one to another, and resting it chiefly with thee, who wert always proud enough and vain enough of the

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attribute; and then more especially as thou hadst assembled us, as far as I know, principally to show the lady thy superiority over us; and us thy triumph over her. And then Tourville (who is always satisfied with wit at *secondhand;* wit upon memory: other men's wit) repeated some verses, as applicable to the subject; which two of us applauded, though full of *double entendre.* Thou, seeing the lady's serious air on one of those repetitions, appliedst thyself to her, desiring her notions of wit: a quality, thou saidst, which every one prized, whether flowing from himself, or found in another.

Then it was that she took all our attention. It was a quality much talked of, she said, but, she believed, very little understood. At least, if she might be so free as to give her judgment of it from what had passed in the present conversation, she must say that wit with men was one thing; with women another.

This startled us all:—How the women looked!—How they pursed in their mouths; a broad smile the moment before upon each, from the verses they had heard repeated, so well understood, as we saw, by their looks! While I besought her to let us know, for our instruction, what wit was with *women:* for such, I was sure, it *ought* to be with *men.*

Cowley, she said, had defined it prettily by negatives. Thou desiredst her to repeat his definition.

She did; and with so much graceful ease, and beauty, and propriety of accent, as would have made bad poetry delightful.

A thousand different shapes it bears;
Comely in thousand shapes appears.
'Tis not a *tale,* 'tis not a *jest,*
Admired with *laughter* at a *feast,*
Nor *florid talk,* which must this title gain:
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.
Much less can that have any place
At which a virgin hides her face.
Such dross the fire must purge away:—'Tis just
The author blush there, where the reader *must.*

Here she stopped, looking round her upon us all with conscious superiority, as I thought. Lord, how we stared! Thou attemptedst to give us thy definition of wit, that thou

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mightest have something to say, and not seem to be surprised into silent modesty.

But as if she cared not to trust thee with the subject, referring to the same author as for his more positive decision, she thus, with the same harmony of voice and accent, emphatically decided upon it.

> *Wit*, like a luxuriant vine,
> Unless to *virtue's* prop it join,
> Firm and erect, tow'rd heaven bound,
> Tho' it with beauteous leaves and pleasant fruit be crowned,
> It lies deformed, and rotting on the ground.

If thou recollectest this part of the conversation, and how like fools we looked at one another; how much it put us out of conceit with ourselves, and made us fear her, when we found our conversation thus excluded from the very character which our vanity had made us think unquestionably ours; and if thou profitest properly by the recollection, thou wilt be of my mind, that there is not so much wit in wickedness as we had flattered ourselves there was.

And after all, I have been of opinion ever since *that* conversation, that the wit of all the rakes and libertines I ever conversed with, from the brilliant Bob Lovelace down to little Johnny Hartop the punster, consists mostly in saying bold and shocking things, with such courage as shall make the modest blush, the impudent laugh, and the ignorant stare.

And why dost thou think I mention these things, so mal-à-propos, as it may seem!—Only, let me tell thee, as an instance (among many that might be given from the same evening's conversation) of this fine woman's superiority in those talents which ennoble nature, and dignify her sex—evidenced not only to each of us, as we offended, but to the flippant Partington, and the grosser, but egregiously hypocritical Sinclair, in the correcting eye, the discouraging blush, in which was mixed as much displeasure as modesty, and sometimes, as the occasion called for it (for we were some of us hardened above the sense of feeling *delicate* reproof), by the sovereign contempt, mingled with a disdainful kind

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of pity, that showed at once her own conscious worth, and our despicable worthlessness.

O Lovelace! what then was the triumph, even in my eye, and what is it still upon reflection, of *true* modesty, of *true* wit, and *true* politeness, over frothy jest, laughing impertinence, and an obscenity so shameful, even to the guilty, that they cannot hint at it but under a double meaning!

Then, as thou hast somewhere observed,* all her correctives *avowed* by her eye. Not poorly, like the generality of her sex, affecting ignorance of meanings too obvious to be concealed; but so resenting, as to show each impudent laugher the offence given to, and taken by a purity that had mistaken its way when it fell into such company.

Such is the woman, such is the angel, whom thou hast betrayed into thy power, and wouldst deceive and ruin.—Sweet creature! did she but know how she is surrounded (as I then thought, as well as now think), and what is *intended*, how much sooner would death be her choice, than so dreadful a situation!—'And how effectually would her 'story, were it generally known, warn all the sex against 'throwing themselves into the power of ours, let our vows, 'oaths, and protestations, be what they will!'

But let me beg of thee, once more, my dear Lovelace, if thou hast any regard for thine own honour, for the honour of thy family, for thy future peace, or for my opinion of thee (who yet pretend not to be so much moved by principle, as by that dazzling merit which ought still more to attract *thee*), to be prevailed upon—to be—to be *humane*, that's all—only, that thou wouldst not disgrace our common humanity!

Hardened as thou art, I know that they are the abandoned people in the house who keep thee up to a resolution against her. Oh, that the sagacious fair one (with so much innocent charity in her own heart) had not so resolutely held those women at distance!—that as she *boarded* there, she had oftener *tabled* with them! Specious as they are, in a week's time, she would have seen through them; they could not

* See Letter XXVIII. of this volume.

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have been always so guarded, as they were when they saw her but seldom, and when they *prepared* themselves to see her; and she would have fled their house as a place infected. And yet, perhaps, with so determined an enterpriser, this discovery might have accelerated her ruin.

I know that thou art nice in thy loves. But are there not hundreds of women, who, though not utterly abandoned, would be taken with thee for mere *personal* regards! Make a toy, if thou wilt, of principle, with respect to such of the sex as regard it as a toy; but rob not an angel of those purities, which, in her own opinion, constitute the difference between angelic and brutal qualities.

With regard to the passion itself, the less of soul in either man or woman, the more sensual are they. Thou, Lovelace, hast a soul, though a corrupted one; and art more intent (as thou even gloriest) upon the preparative stratagem, than upon the end of conquering.

See we not the natural bent of idiots and the crazed? The very appetite is *body;* and when we ourselves are most fools, and crazed, then are we most eager in these pursuits. See what fools this passion makes the wisest men! What snivellers, what dotards, when they suffer themselves to be run away with by it!—An *unpermanent passion!* Since, if (ashamed of its *more proper* name) we must call it *love, love gratified is love satisfied—and love satisfied is indifference begun.* And this is the case where *consent* on one side adds to the obligation on the other. What then but remorse can follow a forcible attempt?

Do not even chaste lovers choose to be alone in their courtship preparations, ashamed to have even a child to witness to their foolish actions, and more foolish expressions? Is this deified passion, in its greatest altitudes, fitted to stand the day? Do not the lovers, when mutual consent awaits their wills, retire to coverts, and to darkness, to complete their wishes? And shall such a sneaking passion as this, which can be so easily gratified by viler objects, be permitted to debase the noblest?

Were not the delays of thy vile purposes owing more to

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the awe which her majestic virtue has inspired thee with, than to thy want of adroitness in villany [I *must* write my free sentiments in this case; for have I not *seen* the angel?], I should be ready to censure some of thy contrivances and pretences to suspend the expected day, as *trite, stale,* and (to me, who know thy intention) *poor;* and too often resorted to, as nothing comes of them to be gloried in; particularly that of Mennell, the vapourish lady, and the ready-furnished house.

She must have thought so too, at times, and in her heart despised thee for them, or love thee (ungrateful as thou art!) to her misfortune; as well as entertain hope against probability. But this would afford another warning to the sex, were they to know her story; 'as it would show them 'what poor pretences they must *seem* to be satisfied with, 'if once they put themselves into the power of a designing 'man.'

If *trial* only was thy end, as once was thy pretence,* enough surely hast thou tried this paragon of virtue and vigilance. But I knew thee too well to expect, at the *time,* that thou wouldest stop there. 'Men of our cast 'put no other bound to their views upon any of the sex, 'than what want of power compels them to put.' I knew that from one advantage gained, thou wouldest proceed to attempt another. Thy habitual aversion to wedlock too well I knew; and indeed thou avowest thy hope to bring her to *cohabitation,* in that very letter in which thou pretendest *trial* to be thy principal view.†

But do not even thy own frequent and involuntary remorses, when thou hast time, place, company, and every other circumstance, to favour thee in thy wicked design, convince thee that there can be no room for a hope so presumptuous?—Why then, since thou wouldest choose to marry her rather than lose her, wilt thou make her hate thee for ever.

But if thou darest to meditate *personal* trial, and art

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII.

† See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII. See also Letters XXXI. and XXXII. of vol. ii.

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sincere in thy resolution to reward her as she behaves in it, let me beseech thee to remove her from this vile house. That will be to give her and thy conscience fair play. So entirely now does the sweet deluded excellence depend upon her supposed happier prospects, that thou needest not to fear that she will fly from thee, or that she will wish to have recourse to that scheme of Miss Howe, which has put thee upon what thou callest thy *masterstrokes*.

But whatever be thy determination on this head; and if I write not in time, but that thou hast actually pulled off the mask; let it not be one of thy devices, if thou wouldst avoid the curses of every heart, and hereafter of thy own, to give her, no not for one hour (be her resentment ever so great), into the power of that villainous woman, who has, if possible, less remorse than thyself; and whose *trade* it is to break the resisting spirit, and utterly to ruin the heart unpractised in evil.—O Lovelace, Lovelace, how many dreadful stories could this horrid woman tell the sex! And shall that of a Clarissa swell the guilty list.

But this I might have spared. Of this, devil as thou art, thou canst not be capable. Thou couldst not enjoy a triumph so disgraceful to thy wicked pride, as well as to humanity.

Shouldest thou think that the melancholy spectacle hourly before me has made me more serious than usual, perhaps thou wilt not be mistaken. But nothing more is to be inferred from hence (were I even to return to my former courses) but that whenever the time of cool reflection comes, whether brought on by our own disasters, or by those of others, we shall undoubtedly, if capable of thought, and if we have time for it, think in the same manner.

We neither of us are such fools as to disbelieve a futurity, or to think, whatever be our practice, that we came hither by chance, and for no end but to do all the mischief we have it in our power to do. Nor am I ashamed to own, that in the prayers which my poor uncle makes me read to him, in the absence of a very good clergyman who regularly attends him, I do not forget to put in a word or two for myself.

If, Lovelace, thou laughest at me, thy ridicule will be

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more conformable to thy *actions* than to thy *belief.—Devils believe and tremble.* Canst thou be more abandoned than they?

And here let me add, with regard to my poor old man, that I often wish thee present but for one half hour in a day, to see the dregs of a gay life running off in the most excruciating tortures that the cholic, the stone, and the surgeon's knife can unitedly inflict, and to hear him bewail the dissoluteness of his past life, in the bitterest anguish of a spirit every hour expecting to be called to its last account. —Yet, by all his confessions, he has not to accuse himself, in sixty-seven years of life, of half the *very* vile enormities which you and I have committed in the last seven only.

I conclude with recommending to your serious consideration all I have written, as proceeding from the heart and soul of

Your assured friend,

JOHN BELFORD.

—o—

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday Afternoon, June 6.

DIFFICULTIES still to be got over in procuring this plaguy license. I ever hated, and ever shall hate, these spiritual lawyers and their court.

And now, Jack, if I have not secured *victory*, I have a *retreat.*

But hold—thy servant with a letter—

A confounded *long* one, though not a *narrative* one—Once more in behalf of this lady!—Lie thee down, oddity! What canst thou write that can have force upon me at this crisis?—And have I not, as I went along, made thee to say all that was necessary for thee to say?

YET once more I will take thee up.

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Trite, stale, poor (sayest thou), are some of my contrivances; that of the widow particularly!—I have no patience with thee. Had not that contrivance its effect at that time, for a procrastination? and had I not then reason to fear that the lady would find enough to make her dislike this house? and was it not right (intending what I intended) to lead her on from time to time with a notion that a house of her own would be ready for her soon, in order to induce her to continue here till it was?

Trite, stale, and *poor!*—Thou art a silly fellow, and no judge, when thou sayest this. Had I not, like a blockhead, revealed to thee, as I *went along*, the secret purposes of my heart, but had kept all in till the event had explained my mysteries, I would have defied thee to have been able, any more than the lady, to have guessed at what was to befall her, till it had actually come to pass. Nor doubt I, in this case, that instead of presuming to reflect upon her for credulity, as *loving me to her misfortune*, and for *hoping against probability*, thou wouldest have been readier, by far, to censure her for nicety and over-scrupulousness. And, let me tell thee, that had she loved me as I wished her to love me, she could not possibly have been so very apprehensive of my designs, nor so ready to be influenced by Miss Howe's precautions, as she has always been, although my general character made not for me with her.

But, in thy opinion, I suffer for that simplicity in my contrivances, which is their principal excellence. No machinery make I necessary. No unnatural flights aim I at. All pure nature, taking advantage of nature, as nature tends; and so simple my devices, that when they are known, thou, even *thou*, imaginest thou couldest have thought of the same. And indeed thou seemest to *own*, that the slight thou puttest upon them is owing to my letting thee into them beforehand—undistinguishing as well as ungrateful as thou art!

Yet, after all, I would not have thee think that I do not know my weak places. I have formerly told thee, that it is difficult for the ablest general to say what he *will* do, or what

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he *can* do, when he is obliged to regulate his motions by those of a watchful enemy.* If thou givest due weight to this consideration, thou wilt not wonder that I should make many marches and countermarches, some of which may appear, to a slight observer, unnecessary.

But let me cursorily enter into debate with thee on this subject, now I am within sight of my journey's end.

Abundance of impertinent things thou tellest me in this letter; some of which thou hadst from myself; others that I knew before.

All that thou sayest in this charming creature's praise is short of what I have said and written on the inexhaustible subject.

Her virtue, her resistance, which are her *merits*, are my *stimulatives*. Have I not told thee so twenty times over?

Devil, as these girls between them call me, what of devil am I, but in my *contrivances?* I am not more a devil than others in the *end* I aim at; for when I have carried my point, it is still but *one* seduction. And I have perhaps been spared the guilt of *many* seductions in the time.

What of uncommon would there be in this case, but for her watchfulness?—As well as I love intrigue and stratagem, dost think that I had not rather have gained my end with less trouble and less guilt?

The man, let me tell thee, who is as wicked as he *can* be, is a worse man than I am. Let me ask any rake in England if, resolving to carry his point, he would have been *so long about it?* or have had *so much compunction* as I have had?

Were every rake, nay, were every man, to sit down, as I do, and write all that enters into his head, or into his heart, and to accuse himself with equal freedom and truth, what an army of miscreants should I have to keep me in countenance!

It is a maxim with some, that if they are left alone with a woman, and make not an attempt upon her, she will think herself affronted—Are not such men as these worse than I am? What an opinion must they have of the whole sex!

Let me defend the sex I so dearly love. If these elder

* See vol. ii. Letter LIV.

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brethren of ours think they have general reason for their assertion, they must have kept very bad company, or must judge of women's hearts by their own. She must be an abandoned woman, who will not shrink as a snail into its shell at a *gross* and *sudden* attempt. A modest woman must be naturally *cold, reserved,* and *shy.* She cannot be *so much* and *so soon* affected as libertines are apt to imagine. She must, *at least,* have some confidence in the *honour* and *silence* of a man, before desire can possibly put forth in her, to encourage and meet his flame. For my own part, I have been always decent in the company of women, till I was *sure* of them. Nor have I ever offered a *great* offence, till I have found *little* ones passed over; and that they shunned me not when they knew my character.

My divine Clarissa has puzzled me, and beat me out of my play: at one time, I hope to overcome by *intimidating* her; at another, by *love;* by the amorous *see-saw,* as I have called it.* And I have only now to join *surprise* to the other two, and see what can be done by all three.

And whose property, I pray thee, shall I invade, if I pursue my schemes of love and vengeance? Have not those who have a right to her renounced that right? Have they not wilfully exposed her to dangers? Yet must know, that such a woman would be considered as lawful prize by as many as could have the opportunity to attempt her?—And had they not thus cruelly exposed her, is she not a *single woman?* And need I tell thee, Jack, that men of our cast, the best of them [the *worst* stick at nothing], think it a great grace and favour done to the married men, if they leave them their wives to themselves; and compound for their sisters, daughters, wards and nieces? Shocking as these principles must be to a reflecting mind, yet such thou knowest are the principles of thousands (who would not act so generously as I have acted by almost all of the sex, over whom I have obtained a power); and as often carried into practice, as their opportunities or courage will permit.—Such therefore have no right to blame *me.*

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXI.

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Thou repeatedly pleadest her sufferings from her family. But I have too often answered this plea, to need to say any more now, than that she has not suffered for *my sake*. For has she not been made the victim of the maliee of her rapacious brother and envious sister, who only waited for an occasion to ruin her with her other relations; and took this *as the first* to drive her out of the house; and, as it happened, into my arms?—Thou knowest how much *against her inclination.*

As for her *own* sins, how many has the dear creature to answer for to *love* and to *me!*—Twenty times, and twenty times twenty, has she not told me, that she refused not the odious Solmes in favour to me? And as often has she not offered to renounce me for the single life, if the implacables would have received her on that condition?—Of what repetitions does thy weak pity make me guilty?

To look a little farther back: canst thou forget what my sufferings were from this haughty beauty in the whole time of my attendance upon her proud motions, in the purlieus of Harlowe Place, and at the little White Hart, at Neale, as we called it?—Did I not threaten vengeance upon her then (and had I not reason?) for disappointing me of a promised interview?

O Jack! what a night had I in the bleak coppice adjoining to her father's paddock! My linen and wig frozen; my limbs absolutely numbed; my fingers only sensible of so much warmth as enabled me to hold a pen; and that obtained by rubbing the skin off, and by beating with my hands my shivering sides! Kneeling on the hoar moss on one knee, writing on the other, if the stiff scrawl could be called writing! My feet, by the time I had done, seeming to have taken root, and actually unable to support me for some minutes?—Love and rage then kept my heart in motion [and only love and rage could do it], or how much more than I *did* suffer must I have suffered!

I told thee, at my melancholy return, what were the contents of the letter I wrote.* And I showed thee after-

* See vol. i. Letter LXIV.

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wards her tyrannical answer to it.* Thou, then, Jack, lovedst thy friend; and pitiedst thy poor suffering Lovelace. Even the affronted God of Love approved then of my threatened vengeance against the fair promiser; though now with thee, in the day of my power, forgetful of the night of my sufferings, he is become an advocate for her.

Nay, was it not he himself that brought to me my adorable *Nemesis;* and both together put me upon this very vow, 'That I would never rest till I had drawn in this goddess-'daughter of the Harlowes to cohabit with me; and that in 'the face of all their proud family?'

Nor canst thou forget this vow. At this instant I have thee before me, as then thou sorrowfully lookedst. Thy strong features glowing with compassion for me; thy lips twisted; thy forehead furrowed; thy whole face drawn out from the stupid round into the ghastly oval; every muscle contributing its power to complete the aspect grievous; and not one word couldst thou utter, but *Amen!* to my vow.

And what of distinguishing love, or favour, or confidence, have I had from her since, to make me forego this vow!

I *renewed* it not, indeed, afterwards; and actually, for a long season, was willing to forget it; till repetitions of the same faults revived the remembrance of the former. And now adding to those the contents of some of Miss Howe's virulent letters, so lately come at, what canst thou say for the rebel, consistent with thy loyalty to thy friend?

Every man to his genius and constitution. Hannibal was called *The father of warlike stratagems.* Had Hannibal been a private man, and turned his plotting head against the *other sex;* or had I been a general, and turned mine against such of my fellow-creatures of *my own,* as I thought myself entitled to consider as my enemies, because they were born and lived in a different climate; Hannibal would have done less mischief; Lovelace more.—That would have been the difference.

Not a sovereign on earth, if he be not a *good man,* and if he be of a warlike temper, but must do a thousand times

* See vol. i. Letter LXIV.

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more mischief than I. And why? Because he has it in his *power* to do more.

An honest man, perhaps thou'lt say, will not wish to have it in his power to do hurt. He *ought not*, let me tell him: for, if he have it, a thousand to one but it makes him both wanton and wicked.

In what, then, am I so *singularly* vile?

In my *contrivances* thou wilt say (for thou art my echo), if not in my proposed *end* of them.

How difficult does every man find it, as well as I, to forego a predominant passion! I have three passions that sway me by turns; all imperial ones—love, revenge, ambition or a desire of conquest.

As to this particular contrivance of Tomlinson and the uncle, which perhaps thou wilt think a black one; that had been spared, had not these *innocent* ladies put me upon finding a husband for their Mrs. Townsend: that device, therefore, is but a *preventive* one. Thinkest thou that I could bear to be outwitted? And may not this very contrivance save a world of mischief? for dost thou think I would have tamely given up the lady to Townsend's tars?

What meanest thou, except to overthrow thy own plea, when thou sayest, *that men of our cast know no other bound to their wickedness but want of power;* yet knowest this lady to be in mine?

Enough, sayest thou, *have I tried this paragon of virtue.* Not so; for I have not tried her at all—all I have been doing is but *preparation to a trial.*

But thou art concerned for the *means* that I may have recourse to in the *trial*, and for my *veracity.*

Silly fellow!—Did ever any man, thinkest thou, deceive a woman, but at the expense of his veracity? how otherwise, can he be said to *deceive?*

As to the *means*, thou dost not imagine that I expect a *direct* consent. My main hope is but in a yielding reluctance; without which I will be sworn, whatever rapes have been attempted, none ever were committed, one person to one person. And good Queen Bess of England, had she

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been living and appealed to, would have declared herself of my mind.

It would not be amiss for the sex to know what our opinions are upon this subject. I love to warn them. I wish no man to succeed with them but myself. I told thee once, that *though a rake, I am not a rake's friend.**

Thou sayest that I ever hated wedlock. And true thou sayest. And yet *as* true, when thou tellest me, that I *would rather marry than lose this lady.* And *will she detest me for ever,* thinkest thou, if I try her, and succeed not?—Take care—take care, Jack!—Seest thou not that thou warnest me that I do not try without resolving to conquer?

I must add, that I have for some time been convinced that I have done wrong to scribble to thee so freely as I have done (and the more so, if I make the lady legally mine); for has not every letter I have written to thee been a bill of indictment against myself? I may partly curse my vanity for it; and I think I will refrain for the future; for thou art really very impertinent.

A *good* man, I own, might urge many of the things thou urgest; but, by my soul, they come very awkwardly from thee. And thou must be sensible that I can answer every tittle of what thou writest, upon the foot of the *maxims we have long held and pursued.*—By the specimen above, thou wilt see that I can.

And pr'ythee tell me, Jack, what but this that follows would have been the epitome of mine and my beloved's story, *after ten years' cohabitation,* had I never written to thee upon the subject, and had I not been my own accuser?

'Robert Lovelace, a notorious woman-eater, makes his 'addresses in an honourable way to Miss Clarissa Harlowe; 'a young lady of the highest merit—fortunes on both sides 'out of the question.

'After encouragement given, he is insulted by her violent 'brother; who thinks it his interest to discountenance the 'match; and who at last challenging him, is obliged to take 'his worthless life at his hands.

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII.

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'The family, as much enraged, as if he had *taken* the life 'he *gave*, insult him personally, and find out an odious 'lover for the young lady.

'To avoid a forced marriage, she is prevailed upon to take 'a step which throws her into Mr. Lovelace's protection.

'Yet, disclaiming any passion for him, she repeatedly 'offers to renounce him for ever, if, on that condition, 'her relations will receive her, and free her from the address 'of the man she hates.

'Mr. Lovelace, a man of strong passions, and, as some 'say, of great pride, thinks himself under very little obliga- 'tion to her on this account; and not being naturally fond 'of marriage, and having so much reason to hate her 'relations, endeavours to prevail upon her to live with him 'what he calls the *life of honour*; and at last, by stratagem, 'art, and contrivance, prevails.

'He resolves never to marry any other woman: takes a 'pride to have her called by his name: a church-rite all the 'difference between them: treats her with deserved tender- 'ness. Nobody questions their marriage but those proud 'relations of hers, whom he wishes to question it. Every 'year a charming boy. Fortunes to support the increasing 'family with splendour. A tender father. Always a warm 'friend; a generous landlord; and a punctual paymaster. 'Now and then however, perhaps, indulging with a new 'object, in order to bring him back with greater delight to his 'charming Clarissa—his only fault, love of the sex—which, 'nevertheless, the women say, will cure itself—defensible '*thus far*, that he breaks no contracts by his rovings.'

And what is there so very greatly amiss, AS THE WORLD GOES, in all this?

Let me aver that there are thousands and ten thousands, who have worse stories to tell than this would appear to be, had I not interested thee in the progress to my great end. And besides, thou knowest that the character I gave myself to Joseph Leman, as to my treatment of my mistress, is pretty near the truth.*

* See vol. ii. Letter LXIII.

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Were I to be as much in earnest in my defence, as thou art warm in my arraignment, I could convince thee, by other arguments, observations, and comparisons [*Is not all human good and evil comparative?*], that though from my ingenuous temper (writing only to thee, who art master of every secret of my heart) I am so ready to accuse myself in my narrations, yet I have something to say *for* myself *to* myself, as I go along; though no one else, perhaps, that was not a rake, would allow any weight to it.—And this caution might I give to thousands, who would stoop for a stone to throw at me: 'See that your own *predominant* 'passions, whatever they be, hurry you not into as much 'wickedness as *mine* do *me*. See, if ye happen to be better 'than I in some things, that ye are not worse in others; 'and in points too that may be of more extensive bad con-'sequence, than that of seducing a girl (and taking care of 'her afterwards), who, *from her cradle, is armed with cautions* 'against the delusions of men.' And yet I am not so partial to my own follies as to think lightly of *this* fault, when I allow myself to think.

Another grave thing I will add, now my hand is in: So 'dearly do I love the sex, that had I found that a character 'for virtue had been generally *necessary* to recommend me 'to them, I should have had a much greater regard to my 'morals, as to the sex, than I have had.'

To sum up all—I am sufficiently apprised that men of worthy and honest hearts, who never allowed themselves in *premeditated* evil, and who take into the account the excellences of this fine creature, will and must not only condemn, but *abhor* me, were they to know as much of me as thou dost. But, methinks, I would be glad to escape the censure of those men, and of those women too, who have never known what capital trials and temptations are; of those who have no genius for enterprise; of those who want rather courage than will; and most particularly of those who have only kept their secret better than I have kept, or wish to keep, mine. Were these exceptions to take place, perhaps, Jack, I should have ten to acquit to one

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that should condemn me. Have I not often said, *that human nature is a rogue?*

I THREATENED above to refrain writing to thee. But take it not to heart, Jack—I must write on, and cannot help it.

—o—

LETTER L.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Wednesday Night, eleven o'clock.

FAITH, Jack, thou hadst half undone me with thy nonsense, though I would not own it in my yesterday's letter: my conscience of thy party before.—But I think I am my own man again.

So near to execution my plot; so near springing my mine; all agreed upon between the women and me; or I believe thou hadst overthrown me.

I have time for a few lines preparative to what is to happen in an hour or two; and I love to write to the *moment.*

We have been extremely happy. How many agreeable days have we known together!—What may the next two hours produce.

When I parted with my charmer (which I did, with infinite reluctance, half an hour ago), it was upon her promise that she would not sit up to write or read. For so engaging was the conversation to me (and indeed my behaviour throughout the whole of it was confessedly agreeable to her), that I insisted, if she did not directly retire to rest, that she should add another happy hour to the former.

To have sat up writing or reading half the night, as she sometimes does, would have frustrated my view, as thou wilt observe, when my little plot unravels.

WHAT—What—What now!—Bounding villain! wouldst thou choke me?

I was speaking to my heart, Jack!—It was then at my

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throat.—And what is all this for?—These shy women, how, when a man thinks himself near the mark, do they *tempest* him!

Is all ready, Dorcas? Has my beloved kept her word with me?—Whether are these billowy heavings owing more to love or to fear? I cannot tell, for the soul of me, of which I have most. If I can but take her before her apprehension, before her eloquence, is awake.

Limbs, why thus convulsed?—Knees, till now so firmly knit, why thus relaxed? why beat you thus together? Will not these trembling fingers, which twice have refused to direct the pen, fail me in the arduous moment?

Once again, why and for what all these convulsions? This project is not to end in *matrimony*, surely!

But the consequences must be greater than I had thought of till this moment—my beloved's destiny or my own may depend upon the issue of the two next hours!

I will recede, I think!

SOFT, O virgin saint, and safe as soft, be thy slumbers!

I will now once more turn to my friend Belford's letter. Thou shalt have fair play, my charmer. I will reperuse what thy advocate has to say for thee. Weak arguments will do, in the frame I am in!—

But what, what's the matter!—What a *double*—But the uproar abates!—What a *double coward* am I!—Or is it that I am taken in a cowardly minute? for heroes have their fits of *fear;* cowards their *brave* moments; and virtuous women, all but my Clarissa, their moment *critical*—

But thus coolly enjoying the reflection in a hurricane!—Again the confusion is renewed——

What! Where!—How came it!

Is my beloved safe?

Oh, wake not too roughly, my beloved!

—o—

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LETTER LI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Thursday Morning, five o'clock (June 8).

Now is my reformation secure; for I never shall love any other woman! Oh! she is all variety! She must be ever new to me! *Imagination* cannot form; much less can the pencil paint; nor can the soul of painting, *poetry*, describe an angel so exquisitely, so elegantly lovely!—But I will not by anticipation pacify thy impatience. Although the subject is too hallowed for profane contemplation, yet shalt thou have the whole before thee as it passed: and this not from a spirit wantoning in description upon so rich a subject; but with a design to put a bound to thy roving thoughts. It will be iniquity, *greater than a Lovelace was ever guilty of*, to carry them farther than I shall acknowledge.

Thus then, connecting my last with the present, I lead to it.

Didst thou not, by the conclusion of my former, perceive the consternation I was in, just as I was about to reperuse thy letter, in order to prevail upon myself to recede from my purpose of awaking in terrors my slumbering charmer? And what dost think was the matter?

I'll tell thee—

At a little after two, when the whole house was still, or seemed to be so, and, as it proved, my Clarissa in bed, and fast asleep; I also in a manner undressed (as indeed I was for an hour before) and in my gown and slippers, though, to oblige thee, writing on!—I was alarmed by a trampling noise overhead, and a confused buzz of mixed voices, some louder than others, like scolding, and little short of screaming. While I was wondering what could be the matter, downstairs ran Dorcas, and at my door, in an accent rather frightedly and hoarsely inward than shrilly clamorous, she cried out Fire! Fire! And this the more alarmed me, as she seemed to endeavour to cry out louder, but could not.

My pen (its last scrawl a benediction on my beloved) dropped from my fingers; and up started I; and making

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but three steps to the door, opening it, cried out, Where! Where! almost as much terrified as the wench; while she, more than half undressed, her petticoats in her hand, unable to speak distinctly, pointed upstairs.

I was there in a moment, and found all owing to the carelessness of Mrs. Sinclair's cook-maid, who, having sat up to read the simple *History of Dorastus and Faunia,* when she should have been in bed, had set fire to an old pair of calico window-curtains.

She had had the presence of mind, in her fright, to tear down the half-burnt vallens, as well as curtains, and had got them, though blazing, into the chimney by the time I came up; so that I had the satisfaction to find the danger happily over.

Meantime Dorcas, after she had directed me upstairs, not knowing the worst was over, and expecting every minute the house would be in a blaze, out of tender regard for her lady [*I shall for ever love the wench for it*], ran to her door, and rapping loudly at it, in a recovered voice cried out, with a shrillness equal to her love, *Fire! Fire! The house is on fire! —Rise, Madam!—This instant rise—if you would not be burnt in your bed!*

No sooner had she made this dreadful outcry, but I heard her lady's door, with hasty violence unbar, unbolt, unlock, and open, and my charmer's voice sounding like that of one going into a fit.

Thou mayest believe that I was greatly affected. I trembled with concern for her, and hastened down faster than the alarm of fire had made me run up, in order to satisfy her that all the danger was over.

When I had *flown down* to her chamber-door, there I beheld the most charming creature in the world, supporting herself on the arm of the gasping Dorcas, sighing, trembling, and ready to faint, with nothing on but an under petticoat, her lovely bosom half open, and her feet just slipped into her shoes. As soon as she saw me, she panted, and struggled to speak; but could only say, O Mr. Lovelace! and down was ready to sink.

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I clasped her in my arms with an ardour she never felt before: My dearest life! fear nothing: I have been up —the danger is over—the fire is got under—and how, foolish devil [to Dorcas], could you thus, by your hideous yell, alarm and frighten my angel!

O Jack! how her sweet bosom, as I clasped her to mine, heaved and panted! I could even distinguish her dear heart flutter, flutter, flutter, against mine; and, for a few minutes, I feared she would go into fits.

Lest the half-lifeless charmer should catch cold in this undress, I lifted her to her bed, and sat down by her upon the side of it, endeavouring with the utmost tenderness, as well of action as expression, to dissipate her terrors.

But what did I get by this my generous care of her, and my *successful* endeavour to bring her to herself?—Nothing (ungrateful as she was!) but the most passionate exclamations: for we had both already forgotten the occasion, dreadful as it was, which had thrown her into my arms; I, from the joy of encircling the almost disrobed body of the loveliest of her sex; she, from the greater terrors that arose from finding herself in my arms, and both seated on the bed, from which she had been so lately frighted.

And now, Belford, reflect upon the distance at which the watchful charmer had hitherto kept me: reflect upon my love, and upon my sufferings for her: reflect upon her vigilance, and how long I had laid in wait to elude it; the awe I had stood in, because of her frozen virtue and over niceness; and that I never before was so happy with her; and then think how ungovernable must be my transports in those happy moments!—And yet, in my own account, I was both decent and generous.

But, far from being affected, as I wished, by an address so fervent (although from a man from whom she had so lately owned a regard, and with whom, but an hour or two before, she had parted with so much satisfaction), I never saw a bitterer, or more moving grief, when she came fully to herself.

She appealed to Heaven against my *treachery*, as she

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called it; while I, by the most solemn vows, pleaded my own equal fright, and the reality of the danger that had alarmed us both.

She conjured me, in the most solemn and affecting manner, by turns threatening and soothing, to quit her apartment, and permit her to hide herself from the light, and from every human eye.

I besought her pardon, yet could not avoid offending; and repeatedly vowed that the next morning's sun should witness our espousals. But taking, I suppose, all my protestations of this kind as an indication that I intended to proceed to the last extremity, she would hear nothing that I said; but redoubling her struggles to get from me, in broken accents, and exclamations the most vehement, she protested that she would not survive what she called a treatment so disgraceful and villainous; and, looking all wildly round her, as if for some instrument of mischief, she espied a pair of sharp-pointed scissors on a chair by the bed-side, and endeavoured to catch them up, with design to make her words good on the spot.

Seeing her desperation, I begged her to be pacified; that she would hear me speak but one word; declaring that I intended no dishonour to her: and having seized the scissors, I threw them into the chimney; and she still insisting vehemently upon my distance, I permitted her to take the chair.

But, oh, the sweet discomposure!—Her bared shoulders, and arms so inimitably fair and lovely: her spread hands crossed over her charming neck; yet not half concealing its glossy beauties: the scanty coat, as she rose from me, giving the whole of her admirable shape, and fine-turned limbs: her eyes running over, yet seeming to threaten future vengeance: and at last her lips uttering what every indignant look and glowing feature portended; exclaiming as if I had done the worst I could do, and vowing never to forgive me; wilt thou wonder if I resumed the incensed, the already too much provoked fair one?

I did; and clasped her once more to my bosom: but,

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considering the delicacy of her frame, her force was amazing, and showed how much in earnest she was in her resentment; for it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to hold her: nor could I prevent her sliding through my arms, to fall upon her knees: which she did at my feet: and there in the anguish of her soul, her streaming eyes lifted up to my face with supplicating softness, hands folded, dishevelled hair; for her night head-dress having fallen off in her struggling, her charming tresses fell down in naturally shining ringlets, as if officious to conceal the dazzling beauties of her neck and shoulders; her lovely bosom too heaving with sighs, and broken sobs, as if to aid her quivering lips pleading for her—in this manner, but when her grief gave way to her speech, in words pronounced with that emphatical propriety, which distinguishes this admirable creature in her elocution from all the women I ever heard speak, did she implore my compassion and my honour.

'Consider me, *dear* Lovelace' [*dear* was her charming word!], 'on my knees I beg you to consider me as a poor 'creature who has no protector but you; who has no 'defence but your honour: by that honour! by your 'humanity! by all you have vowed! I conjure you not to 'make me abhor myself! not to make me vile in my own 'eyes!'

I mentioned to-morrow as the happiest day of my life.

Tell me not of to-morrow. If indeed you mean me honourably, *now*, this very instant NOW! you must show it, and be gone! you can never in a whole long life repair the evils you may NOW make me suffer!

Wicked wretch!—Insolent villain!—Yes, she called me insolent villain, although so much in my power! And for what!—only for kissing (*with passion indeed*) her inimitable neck, her lips, her cheeks, her forehead, and her streaming eyes, as this assemblage of beauties offered itself at once to my ravished sight; she continuing kneeling at my feet as I sat.

If I *am* a villain, Madam!—And then my grasping, but

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trembling hand—I hope I did not hurt the tenderest and loveliest of all her beauties—If I *am* a villain, Madam——

She tore my ruffle, shrunk from my happy hand, with amazing force and agility, as with my other arm I would have encircled her waist.

Indeed you are!—The worst of villains!—Help! dear, blessed people! and screamed out—No help for a poor creature!

Am I then a villain, Madam?—*Am* I then a villain, say you?—and clasped both my arms about her, offering to raise her to my bounding heart.

Oh no!—And yet you are!—And again I was her *dear* Lovelace!—her hands again clasped over her charming bosom.—Kill me! kill me!—if I am odious enough in your eyes to deserve this treatment: and I will thank you!—Too long, much too long has my life been a burden to me!—Or (wildly looking all round her) give me but the means, and I will instantly convince you that my honour is dearer to me than my life!

Then, with still folded hands, and fresh streaming eyes, I was her *blessed* Lovelace; and she would thank me with her latest breath if I would permit her to make that preference, or free her from further indignities.

I sat suspended for a moment: by my soul, thought I, thou art, upon full proof, an angel and no woman! still, however, close clasping her to my bosom, as I raised her from her knees, she again slid through my arms, and dropped upon them.—'See, Mr. Lovelace! —Good God! that I should 'live to see this hour, and to bear this treatment!—See at 'your feet a poor creature, imploring your pity; who, for 'your sake, is abandoned of all the world. Let not my 'father's curse thus dreadfully operate! be not *you* the 'inflicter, who have been the *cause* of it: but spare me, I 'beseech you, spare me!—for how have I deserved this 'treatment from you? for *your own sake*, if not for *my* '*sake*, and as you would that God Almighty, in your last 'hour, should have mercy upon *you*, spare me!'

What heart but must have been penetrated!

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I would again have raised the dear suppliant from her knees; but she would not be raised, till my softened mind, she said, had yielded to her prayer, and bid her rise to be innocent.

Rise then, my angel! rise, and be what you are, and all you wish to be! only pronounce me pardoned for what has passed, and tell me you will continue to look upon me with that eye of favour and serenity which I have been blessed with for some days past, and I will submit to my beloved conqueress, whose power never was at so great a height with me, as now, and retire to my apartment.

God Almighty, said she, hear your prayers in your most arduous moments, as you have heard mine! and now leave me, this moment leave me, to my own recollections: in *that* you will leave me to misery enough, and more than you ought to wish to your bitterest enemy.

Impute not everything, my best beloved, to design, for design it was not——

O Mr. Lovelace!

Upon my soul, Madam, the fire was real—[*and so it was, Jack!*]—The house, my dearest life, might have been consumed by it, as you will be convinced in the morning by ocular demonstration.

O Mr. Lovelace!—

Let my passion for you, Madam, and the unexpected meeting of you at your chamber-door, in an attitude so charming——

Leave me, leave me, this moment!—I beseech you leave me; looking wildly and in confusion about her, and upon herself.

Excuse me, dearest creature, for those liberties which, innocent as they were, your too great delicacy may make you take amiss——

No more! no more!—leave me, I beseech you! again looking upon herself, and round her, in a sweet confusion—Begone! begone!—

Then weeping, she struggled vehemently to withdraw her hands, which all the while I held between mine.—Her struggles!—Oh, what additional charms, as I now reflect,

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did her struggles give to every feature, every limb, of a person so sweetly elegant and lovely!

Impossible, my dearest life, till you pronounce my pardon! —Say but you forgive me!—say but you forgive me!

I beseech you to be gone! leave me to myself, that I may think what I *can* do, and what I *ought* to do.

That, my dearest creature, is not enough. You must tell me that I am forgiven; that you will see me to-morrow as if nothing had happened.

And then I clasped her again in my arms, hoping she would not forgive me.

I will—I do forgive you—wretch that you are!

Nay, my Clarissa! and is it such a reluctant pardon, mingled with a word so upbraiding, that I am to be put off with, when you are thus (clasping her close to me) in my power!

I do, I *do* forgive you!

Heartily?

Yes, heartily!

And freely?

Freely!

And will you look upon me to-morrow as if nothing had passed?

Yes, yes!

I cannot take these peevish affirmatives, so much like intentional negatives!—Say, you will, upon your honour.

Upon my honour, then—Oh! now, begone! begone!—and never, never——

What! never, my angel!—Is this forgiveness?

Never, said she, let what has passed be remembered more!

I insisted upon one kiss to seal my pardon—and retired like a fool, a woman's fool, as I was!—I sneakingly retired! —Couldst thou have believed it?

But I had no sooner entered my own apartment, than reflecting upon the opportunity I had lost, and that all I had gained was but an increase of my own difficulties; and upon the ridicule I should meet with below upon a weakness so much out of my usual character; I repented, and

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hastened back, in hope that, through the distress of mind which I left her in, she had not so soon fastened the door; and I was fully resolved to execute all my purposes, be the consequence what it would; for, thought I, I have already sinned beyond *cordial* forgiveness, I doubt; and if fits and desperation ensue, I can but marry at last, and then I shall make her amends.

But I was justly punished; for her door was fast: and hearing her sigh and sob, as if her heart would burst, My beloved creature, said I, rapping gently [the sobbings then ceasing], I want but to say three words to you, which must be the most acceptable you ever heard from me. Let me see you but for one moment.

I thought I heard her coming to open the door, and my heart leaped in that hope; but it was only to draw another bolt, to make it still the faster; and she either could not or would not answer me, but retired to the farther end of her apartment, to her closet, probably: and more like a fool than before, again I sneaked away.

This was mine, my plot! and this was all I made of it! —I love her more than ever!—And well I may!—never saw I polished ivory so beautiful as her arms and shoulders; never touched I velvet so soft as her skin: her virgin bosom —O Belford, she is all perfection! then such an elegance! —In her struggling losing her shoe (but just slipped on, as I told thee), her pretty foot equally white and delicate as the hand of any other woman, or even as her own hand!

But seest thou not that I have a claim of merit for a grace that everybody hitherto had denied me? and that is for a capacity of being moved by prayers and tears.—Where, where, on this occasion, was the *callous*, where the flint, by which my heart was said to be surrounded?

This, indeed, is the first instance, in the like case, that ever I was wrought upon. But why? *because I never before encountered a resistance so much in earnest:* a resistance, in short, so irresistible.

What a triumph has her sex obtained in my thoughts by this trial, and this resistance?

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But if she can *now* forgive me—*can !*—she *must.* Has she not upon her honour already done it?—But how will the dear creature keep that part of her promise which engages her to see me in the morning as if nothing had happened?

She would give the world, I fancy, to have the first interview over!—She had not best reproach me—yet *not* to reproach me!—what a charming puzzle!—Let her break her word with me at her peril. Fly me she cannot—no appeals lie from my tribunal.—What friend has she in the world, if my compassion exert not itself in her favour?—and then the worthy Captain Tomlinson, and her uncle Harlowe, will be able to make all up for me, be my *next* offence what it may.

As to thy apprehensions of her committing any rashness upon herself, whatever she might have done in her passion, if she could have seized upon her scissors, or found any other weapon, I daresay there is no fear of that from her *deliberate* mind. A man has trouble enough with these truly pious and truly virtuous girls [*now I believe there are such*]; he had need to have some benefit *from,* some security *in,* the rectitude of their minds.

In short, I fear nothing in this lady but grief: yet that's a slow worker, you know; and gives time to pop in a little joy between its sullen fits.

—o—

LETTER LII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Thursday Morning, eight o'clock.

Her chamber-door has not yet been opened. I must not expect she will breakfast with me. Nor dine with me, I doubt. A little silly soul, what troubles does she make to herself by her over-niceness?—All I have done to her, would have been looked upon as a *frolic* only, a *romping bout,* and laughed off by nine parts in ten of the sex accordingly. The more she makes of it, the more painful to herself as well as to me.

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Why now, Jack, were it not better, upon *her own* notions, that she seemed not *so sensible* as she will make herself to be, if she is *very* angry?

But perhaps I am more afraid than I need. I believe I am. From her *over*-niceness arises my fear, more than from any extraordinary reason for resentment. Next time, she may count herself very happy, if she come off no worse.

The dear creature was so frightened, and so fatigued, last night, no wonder she lies it out this morning.

I hope she has had more rest than I have had. Soft and balmy, I hope, have been her slumbers, that she may meet me in tolerable temper. All sweetly blushing and confounded—I *know* how she will look!—But why should she, the *sufferer*, be ashamed, when I, the *trespasser*, am not?

But custom is a prodigious thing. The women are told how much their blushes heighten their graces: they practise for them therefore: blushes come as hastily when they call for them, as their tears: aye, that's it! While we men, taking blushes for a sign of guilt or sheepishness, are equally studious to suppress them.

By my troth, Jack, I am half as much ashamed to see the women below, as my fair one can be to see me. I have not yet opened my door, that I may not be obtruded upon by them.

After all, what devils may one make of the sex! To what a height of—what shall I call it?—must those of it be arrived, who once loved a man with so much distinction, as both Polly and Sally loved me; and yet can have got so much above the pangs of jealousy, so much above the mortifying reflections that arise from dividing and sharing with new objects the affections of them they prefer to all others, as to wish for, and promote a competitorship in his love, and make their supreme delight consist in reducing others to their level?—For thou canst not imagine how even Sally Martin rejoiced last night in the thought that the lady's hour was approaching.

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Past ten o'clock.

I NEVER longed in my life for anything with so much impatience as to see my charmer. She has been stirring, it seems, these two hours.

Dorcas just now tapped at her door, to take her morning commands.

She had none for her, was the answer.

She desired to know if she would not breakfast?

A sullen and low-voiced *negative* received Dorcas.

I will go myself.

THREE different times tapped I at the door, but had no answer.

Permit me, dearest creature, to inquire after your health. As you have not been seen to-day, I am impatient to know how you do.

Not a word of answer; but a deep sigh even to sobbing.

Let me beg of you, Madam, to accompany me up another pair of stairs—you'll rejoice to see what a happy escape we have all had.

A happy escape, indeed, Jack!—For the fire had scorched the window-board, singed the hangings, and burnt through the slit-deal linings of the window-jambs.

No answer, Madam!—Am I not worthy of one word?—Is it thus you keep your promise with me?—Shall I not have the favour of your company for two minutes [only for two minutes] in the dining-room?

Hem!—and a deep sigh!—were all the answer.

Answer me but how you do! Answer me but that you are well! Is this the forgiveness that was the condition of my obedience?

Then, in a faintish but angry voice, Begone from my door!—Wretch! inhuman, barbarous, and all that is base and treacherous!—begone from my door! Nor tease thus a poor creature, entitled to protection, not outrage.

I see, Madam, how you keep your word with me—*if* a sudden impulse, the effects of an unthought-of accident, cannot be forgiven——

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Oh, the dreadful weight of a father's curse, thus in the very letter of it——!

And then her voice dying away in murmurs inarticulate, I looked through the key-hole, and saw her on her knees, her face, though not towards me, lifted up, as well as hands, and these folded, deprecating, I suppose, that gloomy tyrant's curse.

I could not help being moved.

My dearest life! admit me to your presence but for two minutes, and confirm your promised pardon; and may lightning blast me on the spot, if I offer anything but my penitence, at a shrine so sacred!—I will afterwards leave you for a whole day: and till to-morrow morning; and then attend you with writings, all ready to sign, a license obtained, or if it cannot, a minister without one. This once believe me! When you see the reality of the danger that gave occasion for this your unhappy resentment, you will think less hardly of me. And let me beseech you to perform a promise on which I made a reliance not altogether ungenerous.

I cannot see you! Would to Heaven I never had! If I write, that's all I can do.

Let your writing then, my dearest life, confirm your promise: and I will withdraw in expectation of it.

—o—

Past eleven o'clock.

She rung her bell for Dorcas; and with her door in her hand, only half opened, gave her a billet for me.

How did the dear creature look, Dorcas?

She was dressed. She turned her face quite from me; and sighed, as if her heart would break.

Sweet creature:—I kissed the wet wafer, and drew it from the paper with my breath.

These are the contents.—No inscriptive sir! No Mr. Lovelace!

I cannot see you: nor will I, if I can help it. Words cannot express the anguish of my soul on your baseness and ingratitude.

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If the circumstances of things are such, that I can have no way for reconciliation with those who would have been my natural protectors from such outrages, but through *you* [the only inducement I can have to stay a moment longer in your knowledge], pen and ink must be, at present, the only means of communication between us.

Vilest of men, and most detestable of plotters! how have I deserved from you the shocking indignities—but no more —only for your own sake, wish not, at least for a week to come, to see

The undeservedly injured and insulted

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

So thou seest nothing could have stood me in stead, but this plot of Tomlinson and her uncle! To what a pretty pass, nevertheless, have I brought myself!—Had Cæsar been such a fool, he had never passed the rubicon. But after he *had* passed it, had he retreated *re infectâ*, intimidated by a senatorial edict, what a pretty figure would he have made in history!—I might have known that to attempt a robbery, and put a person in bodily fear, is as punishable as if the robbery had been actually committed.

But not to see her for a week!—Dear, pretty soul! how she anticipates me in everything! The counsellor will have finished the writings to-day or to-morrow, at furthest: the license with the parson, or the parson without the license, must also be procured within the next four-and-twenty hours; Pritchard is as good as ready with his indentures tripartite: Tomlinson is at hand with a favourable answer from her uncle—*yet not to see her for a week!*——Dear sweet soul;—her good angel is gone a journey: is truanting at least. But nevertheless, in thy week's time, or in much less, my charmer, I doubt not to complete my triumph!

But what vexes me of all things is, that such an excellent creature should break her word:—Fie, fie, upon her!—But nobody is absolutely perfect! *'Tis human to err, but not to persevere*—I hope my charmer cannot be inhuman!

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LETTER LIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

KING'S ARMS, PALL-MALL, *Thursday, two o'clock.*

SEVERAL billets passed between us before I went out, by the *internuncioship* of Dorcas: for which reason mine are superscribed by her married name.—She would not open her door to receive them; lest I should be near it, I suppose: so Dorcas was forced to put them under the door (after copying them for thee); and thence to take the answers. Read them, if thou wilt, at this place.

To Mrs. Lovelace.

INDEED, my dearest life, you carry this matter too far. What will the people below, who suppose us one as to the ceremony, think of so great a niceness? Liberties so innocent! the occasion so accidental!—You will expose *yourself* as well as *me*.—Hitherto they know nothing of what has passed. And what indeed *has* passed to occasion all this resentment?—I am sure you will not, by a breach of your word of honour, give me reason to conclude that, had I *not* obeyed you, I could have fared no worse.

Most sincerely do I repent the offence given to your delicacy.—But must I, for so accidental an occurrence, be branded by such shocking names?—*Vilest of men*, and *most detestable of plotters*, are hard words!—From the pen of such a lady too.

If you step up another pair of stairs, you will be convinced that, however *detestable* I may be to you, I am no *plotter* in this affair.

I must insist upon seeing you, in order to take your directions upon some of the subjects we talked of yesterday in the evening.

All that is *more than necessary is too much*. I claim your promised pardon, and wish to plead it on my knees.

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I beg your presence in the dining-room for one quarter of an hour, and I will then leave you for the day.—I am,

My dearest life,

Your ever adoring and truly penitent

LOVELACE.

To Mr. Lovelace.

I WILL not see you. I cannot see you. I have no directions to give you. Let Providence decide for me as it pleases.

The more I reflect upon your vileness, your ungrateful, your barbarous vileness, the more I am exasperated against you.

You are the *last* person whose judgment I will take upon what is or is not carried too far in matters of decency.

'Tis grievous to me to write, or even to *think* of you at present. Urge me no more then. Once more, I will *not* see you. Nor care I, now you have made me vile to myself, what other people think of me.

To Mrs. Lovelace.

AGAIN, Madam, I remind you of your promise: and beg leave to say, I insist upon the performance of it.

Remember, dearest creature, that the fault of a blameable person cannot warrant a fault in one more perfect. *Overniceness* may be *underniceness!*

I cannot reproach myself with anything that deserves this high resentment.

I own that the violence of my passion for you might have carried me beyond fit bounds—but that your commands and adjurations had power over me at *such* a moment, I humbly presume to say deserves some consideration.

You enjoin me not to see you for a week. If I have not your pardon before Captain Tomlinson comes to town, what shall I say to *him?*

I beg once more your presence in the dining-room. By my soul, Madam, I *must* see you.

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I want to consult you about the license, and other particulars of great importance. The people below think us married; and I cannot talk to you upon such subjects with the door between us.

For Heaven's sake, favour me with your presence for a few minutes: and I will leave you for the day.

If I am to be forgiven, according to your promise, the earlier forgiveness will be most obliging, and will save great pain to yourself as well as to

Your truly contrite and afflicted

LOVELACE.

To Mr. Lovelace.

THE more you tease me, the worse it will be for you.

Time is wanted to consider whether I ever should think of you at all.

At *present*, it is my sincere wish, that I may never more see your face.

All that can afford you the least shadow of favour from me, arises from the hoped for reconciliation with my *real* friends, not my *Judas* protector.

I am careless at present of consequences. I hate myself. And who is it I have reason to value?—Not the man who could form a plot to disgrace his own hopes, as well as a poor friendless creature (*made friendless by himself*), by insults not to be thought of with patience.

To Mrs. Lovelace.

MADAM,—I will go to the Commons, and proceed in every particular as if I had not the misfortune to be under your displeasure.

I must insist upon it, that however faulty my passion, on so unexpected an incident, made me appear to a lady of your delicacy, yet my compliance with your entreaties at *such* a moment [as it gave you an instance of your power over me, which few men could have shown] ought, duly considered, to entitle me to the effects of that solemn promise which was the condition of my obedience.

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I hope to find you in a kinder, and, I will say, *juster* disposition on my return. Whether I get the license or not, let me beg of you to make the *soon* you have been pleased to bid me hope for, to-morrow morning. This will reconcile everything, and make me the happiest of men.

The settlements are ready to sign, or will be by night.

For Heaven's sake, Madam, do not carry your resentment into a displeasure so disproportionate to the offence. For that would be to expose us both to the people below; and, what is of infinite more consequence to us, to Captain Tomlinson. Let us be able, I beseech you, Madam, to assure him, on his next visit, that we are one.

As I have no hope to be permitted to dine with you, I shall not return till evening: and then, I presume to say, I *expect* [your *promise* authorises me to use the word] to find you disposed to bless, by your consent for to-morrow,

Your adoring

LOVELACE.

WHAT pleasure did I propose to take, how to *enjoy* the sweet confusion in which I expected to find her, while all was so recent!—But she *must*, she *shall*, see me on my return. It were better for *herself*, as well as for *me*, that she had not made *so much ado about nothing*. I must keep my anger alive, lest it sink into compassion. *Love* and *compassion*, be the provocation ever so great, are hard to be separated: while *anger* converts what would be *pity*, without it, into *resentment*. Nothing can be lovely in a man's eye with which he is thoroughly displeased.

I ordered Dorcas, on putting the last billet under the door, and finding it taken up, to tell her, that I hoped an answer to it before I went out.

Her reply was verbal, *tell him that I care not whither he goes, nor what he does.—And this*, re-urged by Dorcas, *was all she had to say to me.*

I looked through the key-hole at my going by her door, and saw her on her knees, at her bed's feet, her head and bosom on the bed, her arms extended [*sweet creature, how*

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I adore her!] ; and in an agony she seemed to be, sobbing, as I heard at that distance, as if her heart would break.—By my soul, Jack, I am a *pity*-ful fellow! Recollection is my enemy!—Divine excellence!—Happy with her for so many days together! Now so unhappy!—And for what?—But she is purity herself. And why, after all, should I thus torment—but I must not trust myself with myself, in the humour I am in.

WAITING here for Mowbray and Mallory, by whose aid I am to get the license, I took papers out of my pocket, to divert myself; and thy last popped officiously the first into my hand. I gave it the honour of a re-perusal; and this revived the subject with me, with which I had resolved not to trust myself.

I remember that the dear creature, in her torn answer to my proposals, says, *condescension is not meanness.* She better knows how to make this out, than any mortal breathing. Condescension indeed *implies* dignity: and dignity ever *was* there in *her* condescension. Yet such a dignity as gave grace to the condescension; for there was no pride, no insult, no apparent superiority, indicated by it.—This, Miss Howe confirms to be a part of her general character.*

I can tell her how she might behave, to make me her own for ever. She knows she cannot fly me. She knows she must see me sooner or later; the sooner the more gracious.—I would allow her to resent [not because the liberties I took with her require resentment, were she not a CLARISSA; but as it becomes her particular niceness to resent]: but would she show more *love* than *abhorrence* of me in her resentment; would she *seem,* if it were *but* to *seem,* to believe the fire no device, and all that followed merely accidental; and descend, upon it, to tender expostulation, and upbraiding for the advantage I would have taken of her surprise; and would she, at last, be satisfied (as *well* she may) that it was attended with no further consequence; and place some generous confidence in my honour [*power*

* See Letter III. of this volume.

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loves to be trusted, Jack], I think I would put an end to all her trials, and pay her my vows at the altar.

Yet, to have taken such bold steps, as with Tomlinson and her uncle—to have made such a progress—O Belford, Belford, how I have puzzled myself as well as her!—This cursed aversion to wedlock how it has entangled me!—What contradictions has it made me guilty of!

How pleasing to myself, to look back upon the happy days I gave her; though mine would doubtless have been more unmixedly so, could I have determined to lay aside my contrivances, and to be as sincere all the time, as she deserved that I should be!

If I find this humour hold but till to-morrow morning [and it has now lasted two full hours, and I seem, methinks, to have pleasure in encouraging it], I will make thee a visit, I think, or get thee to come to me; and then will I—*consult thee upon it.*

But she will not trust me. She will not confide in my honour. Doubt, in this case, is defiance. She loves me not well enough to forgive me generously. *She is so greatly above me!* How can I forgive her for a merit so mortifying to my pride! She *thinks*, she *knows*, she has *told* me, that she is above me. These words are still in my ears, 'Begone, 'Lovelace!—My soul is above thee, man!—Thou hast a proud 'heart to contend with!—My soul is above thee, man!'* Miss Howe thinks her above me too. Thou, even thou, my friend, my *intimate* friend and companion, art of the same opinion. Then I fear her as much as I love her. How shall my pride bear these reflections? My wife (as I have often said, because it so often recurs to my thoughts) to be so *much* my superior!—Myself to be considered but as the *second person* in my own family!—Canst thou teach me to bear such a reflection as this!—To tell me of my acquisition in her, and that she, with all her excellences, will be *mine* in full property, is a mistake—it cannot be so—for shall I not be *hers;* and not *my own?*—Will not every act of her duty (as I cannot deserve it) be a condescension, and a triumph over me?—And

* See Letter XXVII. of this volume.

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must I owe it merely to her *goodness* that she does not despise me?—To have her *condescend* to bear with my follies!—To wound me with an *eye of pity!* A daughter of the Harlowes thus to excel the last, and as I have heretofore said, not the meanest of the Lovelaces *—forbid it!

Yet forbid it not—for do I not now,—do I not every moment—see her before me all over charms, and elegance and purity, as in the struggles of the past midnight? And in these struggles, heart, voice, eyes, hands, and sentiments, so greatly, so gloriously consistent with the character she has sustained from her cradle to the present hour?

But what advantages do I give *thee?*

Yet have I not *always* done her justice? Why then thy teasing impertinence?

However, I forgive thee, Jack—since (so much generous love am I capable of!) I had rather all the world should condemn *me*, than that *her* character should suffer the least impeachment.

The dear creature herself once told me, that there was a strange mixture in my mind.† I have been called *Devil* and *Beelzebub* between the two proud beauties: I must indeed be a Beelzebub, if I had not some tolerable qualities.

But as Miss Howe says, the *suffering time* of this excellent creature is her *shining time.*‡ Hitherto she has done nothing but shine.

She called me *villain*, Belford, within these few hours. And what is the sum of the present argument; but that had I *not* been a villain in her sense of the word, she had not been such an *angel?*

O Jack, Jack! This midnight attempt has made me mad; has utterly undone me! How can the dear creature say, I have made her vile in her *own* eyes, when her behaviour under such a surprise, and her resentment under such circumstances, have so greatly exalted her in *mine?*

Whence, however, this strange rhapsody?—Is it owing to my being *here?* That I am not at *Sinclair's?* But if there be infection in that house, how has my *beloved* escaped it?

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII. † Ibid. Letter XLVIII.
‡ See vol. iii. Letter III.

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But no more in this strain!—I will see what her behaviour will be on my return—yet already do I begin to apprehend some little sinkings, some little retrogradations: for I have just now a doubt arisen, whether, for *her own* sake, I should wish her to forgive me *lightly*, or with *difficulty?*

I AM in a way to come at the wished-for license.

I have now given everything between my beloved and me a full consideration; and my puzzle is over. What has brought me to a speedier determination is, that I think I have found out what she means by the *week's* distance at which she intends to hold me. It is, that she may have time to write to Miss Howe, to put in motion that cursed scheme of hers, and to take measures upon it which shall enable her to abandon and renounce me for ever. Now, Jack, *if I obtain not admission to her presence on my return;* but am refused with haughtiness; if her *week* be insisted upon (such prospects before her); I shall be confirmed in my conjecture; and it will be plain to me, that weak at best was that love, which could give place to punctilio, at a time when the all-reconciling ceremony, as she must think, waits her command:—then will I recollect all her perversenesses; then will I re-peruse Miss Howe's letters, and the transcripts from others of them; give way to my aversion to the life of shackles: and then shall she be mine in my own way.

But, after all, I am in hopes that she will have better considered of everything by the evening; that her threat of a *week's* distance was thrown out in the heat of passion; and that she will allow, that I have as much cause to quarrel with *her* for breach of her word, as she has with *me* for breach of the peace.

These lines of Rowe have got into my head; and I shall repeat them very devoutly all the way the chairman shall poppet me towards her by and by.

> Teach me, some power, the happy art of speech,
> To dress my purpose up in gracious words;
> Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
> And never waken the tempestuous passions.

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LETTER LIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Thursday Evening, June 8.

Oh, for a curse to kill with!—Ruined! Undone! Outwitted! Tricked!—Zounds, man, the lady has gone off!—Absolutely gone off! Escaped!—

Thou knowest not, nor canst conceive, the pangs that wring my heart!—What can I do!— O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!

And thou, too, who hast endeavoured to weaken my hands, wilt but clap thy dragon's wings at the tidings!

Yet I must write, or I shall go distracted! Little less have I been these two hours; despatching messengers to every stage, to every inn, to every waggon or coach, whether flying or creeping, and to every house with a bill up, for five miles round.

The little hypocrite, who knows not a soul in this town [*I thought I was sure of her at any time*], such an unexperienced traitress—giving me hope too, in her first billet, that her expectation of the family-reconciliation would withhold her from taking such a step as this—curse upon her contrivances!—I thought that it was owing to her bashfulness, to her modesty, that, after a few innocent freedoms, she could not look me in the face; when all the while she was impudently [yes, I say, *impudently*, though she be Clarissa Harlowe] contriving to rob me of the dearest property I had ever purchased—purchased by a painful servitude of many months; fighting through the wild beasts of her family for her, and combating with a windmill virtue, which hath cost me millions of perjuries only to attempt; and which now, with its damned air-fans, hast tost me a mile and a half beyond hope?—And this, just as I had arrived within view of the consummation of all my wishes!

O Devil of Love! God of Love no more—how have I deserved this of thee!—Never before the friend of frozen virtue?—*Powerless* demon, for powerless thou must be, if thou *meanedest* not to frustrate my hopes; who shall

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henceforth kneel at thy altars!—May every enterprising heart abhor, despise, execrate, renounce thee, as I do!—But, O Belford, Belford, what signifies cursing now!

How she could effect this her wicked escape is my astonishment; the whole sisterhood having charge of her:—for as yet I have not had patience enough to inquire into the particulars, nor to let a soul of them approach me.

Of this I am sure, *or I had not brought her hither*, there is not a creature belonging to this house, that could be *corrupted* either by *virtue* or *remorse:* the highest joy every infernal nymph, of this worse than infernal habitation, *could* have known, would have been to reduce this proud beauty to her own level.—And as to my villain, who also had charge of her, he is such a seasoned varlet, that he delights in mischief for the sake of it: no bribe could seduce him to betray his trust, were there but wickedness in it!—'Tis well, however, he was out of my way when the cursed news was imparted to me!—Gone, the villain! in quest of her: not to return, nor to see my face [so it seems he declared] till he has heard some tidings of her; and all the *out-of-place* varlets of his numerous acquaintance are summoned and employed in the same business.

To what purpose brought I this angel (angel I must yet call her) to this hellish house?—And was I not meditating to do her deserved honour? By my soul, Belford, I was resolved—but thou knowest what I had *conditionally* resolved—And now, who can tell into what hands she may have fallen!

I am mad, stark mad, by Jupiter, at the thoughts of this.—Unprovided, destitute, unacquainted—some villain, worse than myself, who adores her not as I adore her, may have seized her, and taken advantage of her distress!—Let me perish, Belford, if a whole hecatomb of *innocents,* as the little plagues are called, shall atone for the broken promise and wicked artifices of this *cruel creature!*

Going home, as I did, with resolutions favourable to her, judge thou of my distraction, when her escape was

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first hinted to me, although but in broken sentences. I knew not what I said, nor what I did. I wanted to kill somebody. I flew out of one room into another, while all avoided me but the veteran Betty Carberry, who broke the matter to me. I charged bribery and corruption, in my first fury, upon all; and threatened destruction to old and young, as they should come in my way.

Dorcas continues *locked up* from me: Sally and Polly have not yet dared to appear: the vile Sinclair———

But here comes the odious devil. She taps at the door, though that's only a-jar, whining and snuffling, to try, I suppose, to coax me into temper.

WHAT a helpless state, where a man can only execrate himself and others; the occasion of his rage remaining; the evil increasing upon reflection; time itself conspiring to deepen it!—Oh, how I cursed her!

I have her now, methinks, before me, blubbering—how odious does sorrow make an ugly face!—Thine, Jack, and this old beldam's, in penitentials, instead of moving compassion, must evermore confirm hatred; while beauty in tears is beauty heightened, and what my heart has ever delighted to see.——

'What excuse!—Confound you, and your cursed 'daughters, what excuse can you make?—Is she not 'gone?—Has she not escaped?—But before I am quite 'distracted, before I commit half a hundred murders, let 'me hear how it was.'

I HAVE heard her story!—Art, damned, confounded, wicked, unpardonable art, in a woman of her character—But show me a woman, and I'll show thee a plotter!—This plaguy sex is *art* itself: every individual of it is a plotter by nature.

This is the substance of the old wretch's account.

She told me, 'That I had no sooner left the vile house, 'than Dorcas acquainted the syren' [*Do, Jack, let me call her names!—I beseech thee, Jack, to permit me to call her names!*] 'than Dorcas acquainted her lady with it; and

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'that I had left word that I was gone to Doctors Commons, 'and should be heard of for some hours at the Horn there, 'if inquired after by the counsellor, or anybody else; that 'afterwards I should be either at the Cocoa Tree, or 'King's Arms, and should not return till late. She then 'urged her to take some refreshment.

'She was in tears when Dorcas approached her; her 'saucy eyes swelled with weeping: she refused either to 'eat or drink; sighed as if her heart would break.'—False, devilish grief! *not the humble, silent grief, that only deserves pity!*—Contriving to ruin me, to despoil me of all that I held valuable, in the very midst of it.

'Nevertheless, being resolved not to see me for a week 'at least, she ordered her to bring up three or four French 'rolls, with a little butter, and a decanter of water; tell-'ing her she would dispense with her attendance; and 'that should be all she should live upon in the interim. So 'artful creature! pretending to lay up for a week's siege.'—For, as to substantial food, she, no more than other angels—Angels! said I—the devil take me if she shall be any more an angel!—for she is odious in my eyes; and I hate her mortally!

But, O Lovelace, thou liest!—She is all that is lovely! All that is excellent!

But *is* she, *can* she be gone!—Oh! how Miss Howe will triumph!—but if that little fury receive her, fate shall make me rich amends; for then will I contrive to have them both.

I was looking back for connection—but the devil take connection; I have no business with it: the contrary best befits distraction, and that will soon be my lot!

'Dorcas consulted the old wretch about obeying her: Oh 'yes, by all means; for Mr. Lovelace knew how to come 'at her at any time: and directed a bottle of sherry to be 'added.

'This cheerful compliance so obliged her, that she was pre-'vailed upon to go up and look at the damage done by the 'fire; and seemed not only shocked at it, but, as they thought,

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'satisfied it was no trick; as she owned she had at first 'apprehended it to be. All this made them secure; and 'they laughed in their sleeves, to think what a childish way 'of showing her resentment she had found out; Sally 'throwing out her witticisms that Mrs. Lovelace was right, 'however, *not to quarrel with her bread and butter.*'

Now this very childishness, as *they* imagined it, in such a genius, would have made *me* suspect either her head, after what had happened the night before; or her purpose, when the marriage was (so far as she knew) to be completed within the week in which she was resolved to secrete herself from me in the same house.

'She sent Will. with a letter to Wilson's, directed to 'Miss Howe, ordering him to inquire if there were not one 'for her there.

'He only pretended to go, and brought word there was 'none; and put her letter in his pocket for me.

'She then ordered him to carry another (which she gave 'him) to the Horn Tavern to me.—All this done without 'any seeming hurry: yet she appeared to be very solemn; 'and put her handkerchief frequently to her eyes.

'Will. pretended to come to me with this letter. But 'though the dog had the sagacity to mistrust something on 'her sending him out a second time (and to *me*, whom she 'had refused to see), which he thought extraordinary; and 'mentioned his mistrusts to Sally, Polly, and Dorcas; yet 'they made light of his suspicions; Dorcas assuring them 'all, that her lady seemed more stupid with her grief than 'active; and that she really believed she was a little turned 'in her head, and knew not what she did. But all of them 'depended upon her inexperience, her open temper, and 'upon her not making the least motion towards going out, 'or to have a coach or chair called, as sometimes she had 'done; and still more upon the preparations she had made 'for a week's siege, as I may call it.

'Will. went out, pretending to bring the letter to me; 'but quickly returned; his heart still misgiving him, on 'recollecting my frequent cautions, that he was not to judge

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'for himself, when he had *positive* orders; but if any doubt 'occurred, from circumstances I could not foresee, literally 'to follow them, as the only way to avoid blame.

'But it must have been in this little interval that she 'escaped; for soon after his return, they made fast the 'street-door and hatch, the mother and the two nymphs 'taking a little turn into the garden; Dorcas going up 'stairs, and Will. (to avoid being seen by his lady, or his 'voice heard) down into the kitchen.

'About half an hour after, Dorcas, who had planted 'herself where she could see her lady's door open, had the 'curiosity to go to look through the keyhole, having a mis-'giving, as she said, that the lady might offer some violence 'to herself, in the mood she had been in all day; and find-'ing the key in the door, which was not very usual, she 'tapped at it three or four times, and having no answer, 'opened it, with Madam, Madam, did you call?—Suppos-'ing her in her closet.

'Having no answer, she stepped forward, and was 'astonished to find she was not there. She hastily ran 'into the dining-room, then into my apartments; searched 'every closet; dreading all the time to behold some sad 'catastrophe.

'Not finding her anywhere, she ran down to the old 'creature and her nymphs, with a Have you seen my lady? '—Then she's gone!—She's nowhere above!

'They were sure she could not be gone out.

'The whole house was in an uproar in an instant; some 'running upstairs, some down, from the upper rooms to 'the lower; and all screaming, How should they look *me* 'in the face!

'Will. cried out, he was a dead man: *he* blamed *them*; '*they him*; and every one was an *accuser*, and an *excuser*, at 'the same time.

'When they had searched the whole house, and every 'closet in it, ten times over, to no purpose, they took it 'into their heads to send to all the porters, chairmen, and 'hackney-coachmen, that had been near the house for two

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'hours past, to inquire if any of them saw such a young 'lady; describing her.

'This brought them some light: the only dawning for 'hope that I can have, and which keeps me from absolute 'despair. One of the chairmen gave them this account: 'That he saw such a one come out of the house a little 'before four (in a great hurry, and as if frighted) with a 'little parcel tied up in a handkerchief, in her hand: that 'he took notice to his fellow, who plied her without her 'answering, that she was a fine young lady: that he'd warrant 'she had either a bad husband, or very cross parents; for that 'her eyes seemed swelled with crying. Upon which, a third 'fellow replied that it might be a doe escaped from mother '*Damnable's* park. This Mrs. Sinclair told me with a curse, 'and a wish that she knew the saucy villain: she thought, 'truly, that she *had a better reputation; so handsomely as she 'lived, and so justly as she paid everybody for what she bought; 'her house visited by the best and civilest of gentlemen; and 'no noise or brawls ever heard or known in it.*

'From these appearances, the fellow who gave this infor- 'mation had the curiosity to follow her, unperceived. She 'often looked back. Everybody who passed her turned to 'look after her; passing their verdict upon her tears, her 'hurry, and her charming person; till coming to a stand 'of coaches, a coachman plied her; was accepted; alighted; 'opened the coach-door in a hurry, seeing *her* hurry; and 'in it she stumbled for haste; and, as the fellow believed, 'hurt her shin with the stumble.'

The devil take me, Belford, if my generous heart is not moved for her, notwithstanding her wicked deceit, to think what must be her reflections and apprehensions at the time: —A mind so delicate, heeding no censures; yet, probably afraid of being laid hold of by a Lovelace in every one she saw! At the same time, not knowing to what dangers she was about to expose herself; nor of whom she could obtain shelter; a stranger to the town, and to all its ways; the afternoon far gone: but little money; and no clothes but those she had on!

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It is impossible, in this little interval since last night, that Miss Howe's Townsend could be co-operating.

But how she must abhor me to run all these risks; how heartily must she detest me for my freedoms of last night! Oh! that I had given her greater reason for a resentment so violent!—As to her *virtue*, I am too much enraged to give her the merit due to that. To virtue it cannot be owing that she should fly from the charming prospects that were before her; but to malice, hatred, contempt, Harlowe pride (the worst of pride), and to all the deadly passions that ever reigned in a female breast—and if I can but recover her.—But be still, be calm, be hushed, my stormy passions; for is it not Clarissa [*Harlowe* must I say?] that thus I rave against?

'The fellow heard her say, drive fast! very fast! Where, 'Madam? To Holborn-bars, answered she; repeating, 'Drive very fast!—And up she pulled both the windows: 'and he lost sight of the coach in a minute.

'Will., as soon as he had this intelligence, speeded away 'in hopes to trace her out; declaring, that he would 'never think of seeing me till he had heard some tidings 'of his lady.'

And now, Belford, all my hope is, that this fellow (who attended us in our airing to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Muswell Hill, to Kentish Town) will hear of her at some one or other of those places. And on this I the rather build, as I remember she was once, after our return, very inquisitive about the stages, and their prices; praising the conveniency to passengers in their going off every hour; and this in Will.'s hearing, who was then in attendance. Woe be to the villain, if he recollect not this!

I HAVE been traversing her room, meditating, or taking up everything she but touched or used: the glass she dressed at, I was ready to break, for not giving me the personal image it was wont to reflect of *her*, whose idea is for ever present with me. I call for her, now in the tenderest, now in the most reproachful terms, as if within hearing: wanting

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her, I want my own soul, at least everything dear to it. What a void in my heart! what a chilliness in my blood, as if its circulation were arrested! From her room to my own; in the dining-room, and in and out of every place where I have seen the beloved of my heart, do I hurry; in none can I tarry; her lovely image in every one, in some lively attitude, rushing cruelly upon me, in differently remembered conversations.

But when in my first fury, at my return, I went up two pair of stairs, resolved to find the locked-up Dorcas, and beheld the vainly burnt window-board, and recollected my baffled contrivances, baffled by my own weak folly, I thought my distraction completed; and down I ran as one frighted at a spectre, ready to howl for vexation; my head and my temples shooting with a violence I had never felt before; and my back aching as if the vertebræ were disjointed, and falling in pieces.

But now that I have heard the mother's story, and contemplated the dawning hopes given by the chairman's information, I am a good deal easier, and can make cooler reflections. Most heartily pray I for Will.'s success, every four or five minutes. If I lose her, all my rage will return with redoubled fury. The disgrace to be thus outwitted by a novice, an infant in stratagem and contrivance, added to the violence of my passion for her, will either break my heart, or (what saves many a heart, in evils insupportable) turn my brain. What had I to do to go out a license-hunting, at least till I had seen her, and made up matters with her? And indeed, were it not the privilege of a principal to lay all his own faults upon his underlings, and never be to blame himself, I should be apt to reflect that I am more in fault than anybody. And as the sting of this reflection will sharpen upon me, if I recover her not, how shall I be able to bear it?

If ever—

[Here Mr. Lovelace lays himself under a curse too shocking to be repeated, if he revenge not himself upon the lady, should he once more get her into his hands.]

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I HAVE just now dismissed the sniveling toad Dorcas, who was introduced to me for my pardon by the whining mother. I gave her a kind of negative and ungracious forgiveness. Yet I shall as violently curse the two nymphs, by and by, for the consequences of my own folly: and this will be a good way too to prevent their ridicule upon me, for losing so glorious an opportunity as I had last night, or rather this morning.

I have collected, from the result of the inquiries made of the chairman, and from Dorcas's observations before the cruel creature escaped, a description of her dress; and am resolved, if I cannot otherwise hear of her, to advertise her in the Gazette, as an eloped wife, both by her maiden and acknowledged name; for her elopement will soon be known by every *enemy*: why then should not my *friends* be made acquainted with it, from whose inquiries and informations I may expect some tidings of her?

'She had on a brown lustring night-gown, fresh, and 'looking like new, as everything she wears does, whether 'new or not, from an elegance natural to her. A beaver 'hat, a black ribbon about her neck, and blue knots on her 'breast. A quilted petticoat of carnation-coloured satin; 'a rose diamond ring, supposed on her finger; and in her 'whole person and appearance, as I shall express it, a dignity, 'as well as beauty, that commands the repeated attention 'of every one who sees her.'

The description of her person I shall take a little more pains about. My mind must be more at ease, before I can undertake that. And I shall threaten, 'that if, after a 'certain period given for her voluntary return, she be not 'heard of, I will prosecute any person who presumes to 'entertain, harbour, abet, or encourage her, with all the 'vengeance that an injured gentleman and husband may be 'warranted to take by law, or otherwise.'

FRESH cause of aggravation!—But for this scribbling vein, or I should still run mad.

Again going into her chamber, because it *was* hers, and

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sighing over the bed, and every piece of furniture in it, I cast my eye towards the drawers of the dressing-glass, and saw peep out, as it were, in one of the half-drawn drawers, the corner of a letter. I snatched it out, and found it superscribed by her, *To Mr. Lovelace.* The sight of it made my heart leap, and I trembled so, that I could hardly open the seal.

How does this damned love unman me!—but nobody ever loved as I love!—It is even increased by her unworthy flight, and my disappointment. Ungrateful creature, to fly from a passion thus ardently flaming! which, like the palm, rises the more for being depressed and slighted.

I will not give thee a copy of this letter. I owe her not so much service.

But wouldst thou think that this *haughty promise-breaker* could resolve as she does, absolutely and for ever to renounce me for what passed last night? That she could resolve to forego all her opening prospects of reconciliation; that reconciliation with a worthless family, on which she had set her whole heart?—Yet she does—she acquits me of all obligation to her, and herself of all expectations from me—And for what? —Oh, that indeed I had given her real cause! Damned confounded niceness, prudery, affectation, or pretty ignorance, if not affectation!—By my soul, Belford, I told thee all—I was more indebted to her struggles, than to my own forwardness. I cannot support my own reflections upon a decency so ill-requited.—She could not, she would not have been so much a Harlowe in her resentment, had I deserved, as I *ought* to have done, her resentment. All she feared had then been over; and her own good sense, and even modesty, would have taught her to make the best of it.

But if ever again I get her into my hands, *art,* and more *art,* and *compulsion* too, if she make it necessary [*and 'tis plain that nothing else will do*], shall she experience from the man whose fear *of* her has been above even his passion *for* her; and whose gentleness and forbearance she has thus *perfidiously* triumphed over. Well says the poet,

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'Tis nobler like a lion to invade
When appetite directs, and seize my prey,
Than to wait tamely, like a begging dog,
Till dull consent throws out the scraps of love.

Thou knowest what I have so lately vowed—and yet, at times [cruel creature, and ungrateful as cruel!] I can subscribe with too much truth to those lines of another poet:

She reigns more fully in my soul than ever;
She garrisons my breast, and mans against me
Even my own rebel thoughts, with thousand graces,
Ten thousand charms, and new-discovered beauties!

—o—

LETTER LV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

A LETTER is put into my hands by Wilson himself.—Such a letter!

A letter from Miss Howe to her cruel friend!—

I made no scruple to open it.

It is a miracle that I fell not into fits at the reading of it; and at the thought of what *might* have been the consequence, had it come into the hands of *this Clarissa Harlowe.* Let my justly excited rage excuse my irreverence.

Collins, though not his day, brought it this afternoon to Wilson's, with a particular desire that it might be sent with all speed to Miss Beaumont's lodgings, and given, if possible, into her own hands. He had before been here (at Mrs. Sinclair's) with intent to deliver it to the lady with his own hand; but was told [*too truly told!*] that she was abroad; but that they would give her anything he should leave for her the moment she returned. But he cared not to trust them with his business, and went away to Wilson's (as I find by the description of him at both places), and there left the letter; but not till he had a second time called here, and found her not come in.

The letter [which I shall enclose; for it is too long to transcribe] will account to thee for *Collins's* coming hither.

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Oh, this devilish Miss Howe; something must be resolved upon and done with that little fury!

THOU wilt see the margin of this cursed letter crowded with indices [☞]. I put them to mark the places which call for vengeance upon the vixen writer, or which require animadversion. Return thou it to me the moment thou hast perused it.

Read it here; and avoid trembling for me, if thou canst.

To Miss Lætitia Beaumont.

Wednesday, June 7.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—You will perhaps think that I have been too long silent. But I had begun two letters at different times since my last, and written a great deal each time; and with spirit enough, I assure ☞ you; incensed as I was against the abominable wretch you are with; particularly on reading yours of the 21st of the past month.*

☞ The *first* I intended to keep open till I could give you some account of my proceedings with Mrs. Townsend. It was some days before I saw her: and this intervenient space giving me time to reperuse what I had written, I thought it proper to lay that aside, and ☞ to write in a style a little less fervent; for you would ☞ have blamed me, I know, for the freedom of some of my expressions. [*Execrations*, if you please.] And when I had gone a good way in the *second*, the change in your prospects, on his communicating to you Miss Montague's letter, and his better behaviour, occasioning a change in your mind, I laid that aside also. And in this uncertainty, thought I would wait to see the issue of affairs between you before I wrote again; believing that all would soon be decided one way or other.

I had still, perhaps, held his resolution [as every appearance, according to your letters, was more and

* See Letter XXVI. of this volume.

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more promising], had not the two passed days furnished me with intelligence which it highly imports you to know.

But I must stop here, and take a little walk, to try to keep down that just indignation which rises to my pen, when I am about to relate to you what I must communicate.

I AM not my own mistress enough—then my mother —always up and down—and watching as if I were writing to a fellow. But I will try if I can contain myself in tolerable bounds.

The women of the house where you are—oh, my dear, the women of the house—but you never thought highly of them—so it cannot be very surprising—nor would ☞ you have *stayed so long with them, had not the notion of removing to one of your own* made you less uneasy, and less curious about their characters and behaviour. Yet I could *now* wish that you had been less reserved among ☞ them.—But I tease you.—In short, my dear, you are certainly in a devilish house!—Be assured that the woman is one of the vilest of women—nor does she go to you by her right name.—[Very true!]—Her name is *not* Sinclair, nor is the street she lives in Dover Street. Did you never go out by yourself, and discharge the coach or chair, and return by another coach or ☞ chair? If you did [yet I don't remember that you ever wrote to me that you did], you would never have found your way to the vile house, either by the woman's name, *Sinclair,* or by the street's name, mentioned by that Doleman in his letter about the lodgings.*

The wretch might indeed have held out these false lights a little more excusably, had the house been an honest house; and had his end only been to prevent mischief from your brother. But this contrivance was antecedent, as I think, to your brother's project; so that no excuse can be made for his intentions at the

* Vol. ii. Letters LIII. and LIV.

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☞ *time*—the man, whatever he may *now* intend, was certainly then, even *then*, a villain in his heart.

☞ I AM excessively concerned that I should be prevailed upon, between *your* over-niceness, on one hand, and my *mother's* positiveness, on the other, to be satisfied without knowing how to direct to you at your lodgings. I think too, that the proposal that I should be put off to a *third-hand* knowledge, or rather veiled in a *first-hand* ignorance, came from him, and that it was only acquiesced in by you, as it was by me,* upon needless and weak considerations; because, truly, I might have it to say, if challenged, *that I knew not where to send to you!* I am ashamed of myself!—Had this been at *first* excusable, it could not be a good reason for going
☞ on in the folly, when you had no liking to the house, and when he began to play tricks, and delay with you. —What! I was to mistrust myself, was I? I was to
☞ allow it to be thought that I could not keep my own
☞ secret?—But the house *to be taken at this time, and at*
☞ *that time*, led us both on—like fools, like tame fools, in a string. Upon my life, my dear, this man is a vile, a contemptible villain—I must speak out!—How has he laughed in his sleeve at us both, I warrant, for I can't tell how long!

And yet who could have thought that a man of for-
☞ tune, and some *reputation* [this Doleman, I mean—not your wretch, to be sure!], formerly a rake, indeed [I inquired after him long ago; and so was the easier satisfied], but married to a woman of family—having had
☞ a palsy-blow—and, one would think, a penitent, should recommend such a house [why, my dear, he could not

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXI. par. 12, and Letter LXXIII. par. 12,—where the reader will observe that the proposal came from herself; which, as it was also mentioned by Mr. Lovelace (towards the end of Letter LXXVIII. in vol. ii.), she may be presumed to have forgotten. So that Clarissa had a double inducement for acquiescing with the proposed method of carrying on the correspondence between Miss Howe and herself by Wilson's conveyance, and by the name of Lætitia Beaumont.

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inquire of it, but must find it to be bad] to such a man as Lovelace, to bring his future, nay, his *then* supposed, bride to?

☞ I WRITE, perhaps, with too much violence, to be clear, but I cannot help it. Yet I lay down my pen, and take it up every ten minutes, in order to write with some temper—my mother too, in and out.—What need I (see asks me) lock myself in, if I am only reading past correspondences? For that is my pretence, when she ☞ comes poking in with her face sharpened to an edge, as I may say, by a curiosity that gives her more pain than ☞ pleasure.—The Lord forgive me; but I believe I shall huff her next time she comes in.

Do *you* forgive me too, my dear—my mother *ought;* because she says I am my father's girl; and because I am sure I am *hers.* I don't know what to do—I don't know what to write next—I have so much to write, yet have so little patience, and so little opportunity.

But I will tell you how I came by my intelligence. ☞ *That* being a *fact,* and requiring the less attention, I will try to account to you for *that.*

Thus, then, it came about: 'Miss Lardner (whom 'you have seen at her cousin Biddulph's) saw you at 'St. James's church on Sunday was fortnight. She 'kept you in her eye during the whole time; but could 'not once obtain the notice of yours, though she 'courtsied to you twice. She thought to pay her com-'pliments to you when the service was over, for she 'doubted not but you were married—and for an odd ☞ 'reason—*because you came to church by yourself.* Every 'eye (as usual, wherever you are, she said) was upon 'you; and this seeming to give you hurry, and you 'being nearer the door than she, you slid out, before 'she could get to you.—But she ordered her servant 'to follow you till you were housed. This servant saw 'you step into a chair, which waited for you; and you

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'ordered the men to carry you to the place where they 'took you up.

'The next day, Miss Lardner sent the same servant, 'out of mere curiosity, to make private inquiry whether 'Mr. Lovelace were, or were not, with you there.— 'And this inquiry brought out, from *different* people, ☞ 'that the house was suspected to be one of those gen- 'teel wicked houses, which receive and accommodate '*fashionable people* of both sexes.

'Miss Lardner, confounded at this strange intel- 'ligence, made further inquiry; enjoining secrecy to 'the servant she had sent, as well as to the gentleman ☞ 'whom she employed; who had it confirmed from a 'rakish friend, who knew the house; and told him 'that there were two houses: the one *in which all* '*decent appearances were preserved, and guests rarely* '*admitted;* the other, the receptacle of those who were 'absolutely engaged, and broken to the vile yoke.'

☞ Say—my dear creature—say—shall I not execrate 'the wretch?—But words are weak.—What can I say, 'that will suitably express my abhorrence of such a 'villain as he must have been, when he meditated to 'carry a Clarissa to such a place!

'Miss Lardner kept this to herself some days, not 'knowing what to do; for she loves you, and admires 'you of all women. At last she revealed it, but in 'confidence, to Miss Biddulph, by letter. Miss Bid- 'dulph, in like confidence, being afraid it would dis- 'tract *me*, were I to know it, communicated it to Miss 'Lloyd; and so, like a whispered scandal, it passed 'through several canals, and then it came to me; 'which was not till last Monday.'

I thought I should have fainted upon the surprising communication. But rage taking place, it blew away the sudden illness. I besought Miss Lloyd to re-enjoin secrecy to every one. I told her that I would ☞ not for the world that my mother, or any of your family, should know it. And I instantly caused a

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trusty friend to make what inquiries he could about Tomlinson.

☞ I had thoughts to have done it before I had this intelligence: but not imagining it to be needful, and little thinking that you could be in such a house, and as you were pleased with your changed prospects, I ☞ forbore. And the rather forbore, as the matter is so laid, that Mrs. Hodges is supposed to know nothing of the projected treaty of accommodation; but, on the contrary, that it was designed to be a secret to her, and to everybody but immediate parties; and it was Mrs. Hodges that I had proposed to sound by a *second* hand.

☞ Now, my dear, it is certain, without applying to that too much favoured housekeeper, that there is not such a man within ten miles of your uncle.—Very true!—One *Tomkins* there is, about four miles off; but he is a day-labourer: and one *Thompson*, about five miles distant the other way; but he is a parish schoolmaster, poor, and about seventy.

☞ A man, though but of 800*l.* a year, cannot come from one country to settle in another, but everybody in both must know it, and talk of it.

☞ Mrs. Hodges may yet be sounded at a distance, if you will. Your uncle is an old man. Old men imagine themselves under obligation to their paramours, if ☞ younger than themselves, and seldom keep anything from their knowledge. But if we suppose him to make secret of the designed treaty, it is impossible, *before* that treaty was thought of, but she must have seen him, at least have *heard* your uncle speak praisefully of a man he is said to be so intimate with, let him have been ever so little a while in those parts.

☞ Yet, methinks, the story is so plausible—Tomlinson, as you describe him, is so good a man, and so much of a gentleman; the end to be answered by his being an ☞ impostor, so much *more than necessary* if Lovelace has villany in his head; and as you are in such a house ☞ —your wretch's behaviour to him was so petulant and

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lordly; and Tomlinson's answer so full of spirit and
☞ circumstance; and then what he communicated to you of Mr. Hickman's application to your uncle, and of Mrs. Norton's to your mother [some of which par-
☞ ticulars, I am satisfied, his vile agent, Joseph Leman, could not reveal to his viler employer]; his pressing on the marriage day, in the name of your uncle, which it
☞ could not answer any *wicked* purpose for him to do; and what he writes of your uncle's proposal, to have it thought that you were married from the time that you have lived in one house together; and that to be made to agree with the time of Mr. Hickman's visit to your
☞ uncle. The insisting on a trusty person's being present at the ceremony, at that uncle's nomination—*These things make me willing to try for a tolerable construction to be made of all.* Though I am so much puzzled by
☞ what occurs on both sides of the question, that I cannot but abhor the devilish wretch, whose inventions and contrivances are for ever employing an inquisitive
☞ head, as mine is, without affording the means of absolute detection.

But this is what I am ready to conjecture, that Tomlinson, specious as he is, is a machine of Lovelace;
☞ and that he is employed for some end, which has not yet been answered. This is certain, that not only Tomlinson, but Mennell, who I think attended you more than once at this vile house, must know it to *be* a vile house.

What can you then think of Tomlinson's declaring himself in *favour* of it upon inquiry?

Lovelace too must know it to be so; if not before he brought you to it, soon after.

☞ Perhaps the *company he found there*, may be the most probable way of accounting for his bearing with the house, and for his strange suspension of marriage, when it was in his power to call such an angel of a woman his.

☞ Oh, my dear, the man is a villain!—the greatest of

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villains, in every light!—I am convinced that he is.—And this Doleman must be another of his implements!

☞ There are so many wretches who think *that* to be no sin, which is one of the greatest and the most ungrateful of all sins,—to ruin young creatures of our sex who place their confidence in them; that the wonder is less than the shame, that people, of *appearance* at least, are found to promote the horrid purposes of profligates of fortune and interest!

☞ But can I think [you will ask with indignant astonishment] that Lovelace can have designs upon your honour?

☞ That such designs he *has had*, if he *still* hold them not, I can have no doubt, now that I know the house he has brought you to, to be a vile one. This is a clue that has led me to account for all his behaviour to you ever since you have been in his hands.

Allow me a brief retrospection of it all.

We both know that pride, revenge, and a delight to tread in unbeaten paths, are principal ingredients in the character of this finished libertine.

☞ He hates all your family—yourself excepted: and I have several times thought, that I have seen him stung ☞ and mortified that love has obliged him to kneel at your footstool, because you are a *Harlowe*. Yet is this wretch a savage in love.—Love that humanises the fiercest ☞ spirits, has not been able to subdue his. His *pride*, and the credit which a few *plausible qualities*, sprinkled ☞ among his *odious ones*, have given him, have secured him too good a reception from our eye-judging, our undistinguishing, our self-flattering, our too-confiding sex, to make assiduity and obsequiousness, and a conquest of his unruly passions, any part of his study.

☞ He has some reason for his animosity to *all* the men, and to *one* woman of your family. He has always shown you, and his own family too, that he prefers his ☞ pride to his interest. He is a declared marriage-hater; a notorious intriguer; full of his inventions, and glory-

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ing in them: he never could draw you into declarations of love; nor till your *wise* relations persecuted you as ☞ they did, to receive his addresses as a lover. He knew that you professedly disliked him for his immoralities; he could not, therefore, justly blame you for the coldness and indifference of your behaviour to him.

☞ The prevention of mischief was your first main view in the correspondence he drew you into. He ought not, then, to have wondered that you declared your preference of the *single life* to *any* matrimonial engage- ☞ ment. He knew that this was *always* your preference; and *that* before he tricked you away so artfully. What was his conduct to you afterwards, that you should of a sudden change it?

Thus was your whole behaviour regular, consistent, and dutiful to those to whom by birth you owed duty; and neither prudish, coquetish, nor tyrannical to him.

☞ He had *agreed* to go on with you upon those your own terms, and to rely only on *his own merits* and *future reformation* for your favour.

☞ It was plain, to me, indeed, to whom you communicated all that *you knew* of your own heart, though not all of it that *I found out*, that love had pretty early gained footing in it. And this you yourself would have discovered sooner than you did, had not his ☞ alarming, his unpolite, his rough conduct, kept it under.

☞ I knew by experience that love is a fire that is not to be played with without burning one's fingers: I knew it to be a dangerous thing for two single persons of different sexes to enter into familiarity and correspondence with each other: since, as to the latter, must not a person be capable of premeditated art, who can sit down to write, and not write from the heart?—And a woman to write her heart to a man practised in deceit, or even to a man of some character, what advantage does it give him over her?

☞ As this man's vanity had made him imagine that no

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woman could be proof against love, when his address was honourable; no wonder that he struggled, like a lion held in toils, against a passion that he thought not returned. And how could you, *at first*, show a return in love, to so fierce a spirit, and who had seduced you away by vile artifices, but to the approval of those artifices.

☞ Hence, perhaps, it is not difficult to believe that it became possible for such a wretch as this to give way to his old prejudices against marriage; and to that revenge which had always been a first passion with him.

This is the only way, I think, to account for his horrid views in bringing you to a vile house.

And now may not all the rest be naturally accounted for?—His delays—his teasing ways—his bringing you to bear with his lodging in the same house—his making you pass to the people of it as his wife, *though restrictively* ☞ *so*, yet with hope, no doubt (vilest of villains as he is!) to take you at an advantage—his bringing you ☞ into the company of his libertine companions—the attempt of imposing upon you that Miss Partington for a bedfellow, very probably his own invention for the worst of purposes—his terrifying you at many different times—his obtruding himself upon you when you went out to church; no doubt to prevent your finding out what the people of the house were—the advantages he made of your brother's foolish project with Singleton.

See, my dear, how naturally all this follows from the ☞ discovery made by Miss Lardner. See how the monster, whom I thought, and so often called, a *fool*, ☞ comes out to have been all the time one of the greatest villains in the world!

But if this be so, what [it would be asked by an indifferent person] has hitherto saved you? Glorious creature!—What, morally speaking, but your watchfulness! What but that, and the majesty of your virtue; *the native dignity*, which, in a situation so very difficult (friendless, destitute, passing for a wife, cast

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into the company of creatures accustomed to betray and ruin innocent hearts), has hitherto enabled you to baffle, overawe, and confound, such a dangerous libertine as this; so habitually remorseless, as you have observed him to be; so very various in his temper, so inventive, so seconded, so supported, so instigated, too probably, as he has been!—That *native dignity*, that *heroism*, I will call it, which has, on all proper occasions, exerted itself in its *full* lustre, unmingled with that charming obligingness and condescending sweetness, which is evermore the *softener* of that dignity, when your mind is free and unapprehensive!

Let me stop to admire, and to bless my beloved friend, who, unhappily for herself, at an age so tender, unacquainted as she was with the world, and with the vile arts of libertines, having been called upon to sustain the hardest and most shocking trials, from persecuting relations on one hand, and from a villainous lover on the other, has been enabled to give such an illustrious example of fortitude and prudence as never woman gave before her; and who, as I have heretofore observed,* has made a far greater figure in adversity, than she possibly could have made, had all her shining qualities been exerted in their full force and power, by the continuance of that prosperous run of fortune which attended her for eighteen years of life out of nineteen.

But now, my dear, do I apprehend that you are in greater danger than ever yet you have been in; if you are not married in a week; and yet stay in this abominable house. For were you out of it, I own I should not be much afraid for you.

These are my thoughts, on the most deliberate consideration: 'That he is now convinced, that he has not 'been able to draw you off your guard: that therefore, 'if he can obtain no new advantage over you as he 'goes along, he is resolved to do you all the *poor justice*

* See Letter IV. of this volume.

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'that it is in the power of such a wretch as he to do 'you. He is the rather induced to this, as he sees that 'all his own family have warmly engaged themselves in 'your cause: and that it is his *highest interest* to be 'just to you. Then the horrid wretch loves you (as 'well he may) above all women. I have no doubt of 'this; with *such* a love as such a wretch is capable of: 'with *such* a love as Herod loved his Mariamne. He 'is now therefore, very probably, at last, in earnest.'

I took time for inquiries of different natures, as I knew, by the train you are in, that whatever his designs are, they cannot ripen either for good or evil till something shall result from this new device of his about Tomlinson and your uncle.

Device I have no doubt that it is, whatever this dark, this impenetrable spirit intends by it.

And yet I found it to be true, that Counsellor Williams (whom Mr. Hickman knows to be a man of eminence in his profession) has actually as good as finished the settlements: that two draughts of them have been made; one avowedly to be sent to one Captain Tomlinson, as the clerk says:—and I find that a license has actually been more than once endeavoured to be obtained; and that difficulties have hitherto been made, equally to Lovelace's vexation and disappointment. My mother's proctor, who is very intimate with the proctor applied to by the wretch, has come at this information in confidence; and hints that, as Mr. Lovelace is a man of high fortunes, these difficulties will probably be got over.

But here follow the causes of my apprehension of your danger; which I should not have had a thought of (since nothing *very* vile has yet been attempted) but on finding what a house you are in, and, on that discovery, laying together and ruminating on past occurrences.

'You are obliged, from the present favourable appear- 'ances, to give him your company whenever he requests

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'it.—You are under a necessity of forgetting, or seeming 'ing to forget, past disobligations; and to receive his 'addresses as those of a betrothed lover.—You will incur 'the censure of prudery and affectation, even perhaps 'in your own apprehension, if you keep him at that ☞ 'distance which has hitherto been your security.—His 'sudden (and as suddenly recovered) illness has given 'him an opportunity to find out that you love him. '[*Alas! my dear, I knew you loved him!*] He is, as ☞ 'you relate, every hour more and more an encroacher 'upon it. He has seemed to change his nature, and is ☞ 'all love and gentleness. The wolf has put on the 'sheep's clothing; yet more than once has shown his 'teeth, and his hardly-sheathed claws. The instance 'you have given of his freedom with your person,* 'which you could not but resent; and yet, as matters 'are circumstanced between you, could not but pass 'over, when Tomlinson's letter called you into his com- ☞ 'pany,† show the advantage he has now over you; and 'also, that if he can obtain greater, he will.—And for 'this very reason (as I apprehend) it is, that Tomlinson ☞ 'is introduced; that is to say, to give you the greater 'security, and to be a mediator, if mortal offence be 'given you by any villainous attempt.—The day seems 'not now to be so much in your power as it ought to 'be, since that now partly depends on your uncle, whose 'presence, at your own motion, he has wished on the 'occasion. A wish, were all real, very unlikely, I think, 'to be granted.'

☞ And thus situated, should he offer greater freedoms, must you not forgive him?

I fear nothing (as I know who has said) that devil carnate or incarnate can fairly do against a virtue so established.‡—But surprises, my dear, in such a house

* She means the freedom Mr. Lovelace took with her before the fire-plot. See Letter XLVI. of this volume. When Miss Howe wrote this letter she could not know of that.

† See Letter XLVII. of this volume.

‡ See Mrs. Norton's Letter, page 21 of this volume.

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as that you are in, and in such circumstances as I have mentioned, I greatly fear! the man one who has already ☞ triumphed over persons worthy of his alliance.

☞ What then have you to do, but to fly this house, this infernal house!—Oh, that your heart would let you fly the *man*!

☞ If you should be disposed so to do, Mrs. Townsend shall be ready at your command.—But if you meet with no impediments, no new causes of doubt, I think your reputation in the eye of the world, though not your ☞ happiness, is concerned, that you should be his—and yet I cannot bear that these libertines should be rewarded for their villany with the best of the sex, when the worst of it are too good for them.

But if you meet with the least ground for suspicion; if he would detain you at the odious house, or wish you ☞ to stay, now you know what the people are; fly *him*, whatever your prospects are, as well as *them*.

In one of your next airings, if you have no other way, ☞ refuse to return with him. Name me for you intelligencer, that you are in a bad house, and if you think you cannot now break with him, seem rather to believe ☞ that he may not know it to be so; and that I do not believe he does: and yet this belief in us both must appear to be very gross.

But suppose you desire to go out of town for the air, this sultry weather, and insist upon it? You may plead your health for so doing. He dare not resist ☞ such a plea. Your brother's foolish scheme, I am told, is certainly given up; so you need not be afraid on that account.

If you do not fly the house upon reading of this, or some way or other get out of it, I shall judge of his power over you, by the little you will have over either him or yourself.

☞ One of my informers has made slight inquiries concerning Mrs. Fretchville. Did he ever name to you the street or square she lived in?—I don't remember

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☞ that you, in any of yours, mentioned the place of her abode to me. Strange, very strange, this, I think! No such person or house can be found, near any of the new streets or squares, where the lights I had from your letters led me to imagine her house might be.—
☞ Ask him what street the house is in, if he has not told you; and let me know. If he make a difficulty of
☞ that circumstance, it will amount to a detection.—And yet, I think, you have enough without this.

I shall send this long letter by Collins, who changes his day to oblige me; and that he may try (now I know where you are) to get it into your own hands. If he cannot, he will leave it at Wilson's. As none of our letters by that conveyance have miscarried when you have been in more *apparently* disagreeable situations than you are in at present, I hope that this will go safe, if Collins should be obliged to leave it there.

☞ I wrote a short letter to you in my first agitations. It contained not above twenty lines, all full of fright, alarm, and execration. But being afraid that my vehemence would too much affect you, I thought it better to wait a little, as well for the reasons already hinted at, as to be able to give you as many particulars as I could, and my thoughts upon all. And now, I think, taking to your aid other circumstances, as they *have* offered, or *may* offer, you will be sufficiently armed to resist all his machinations, be what they will.

☞ One word more. Command me up, if I can be of the least service or pleasure to you. I value not fame; I value not censure; nor even life itself, I verily think, as I do your honour, and your friendship—For, is not your honour my honour? And is not your friendship the pride of my life?

May Heaven preserve you, my dearest creature, in honour and safety, is the prayer, the hourly prayer of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

Thursday Morning, 5. I have written all night.

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To Miss Howe.

MY DEAREST CREATURE,—How you have shocked, confounded, surprised, astonished me, by your dreadful communication!—My *heart is too weak* to bear up against such a stroke as this!—When all hope was with me! When my prospects were so much mended!—But can there be such villany in men, as in this vile principal, and equally vile agent!

I am really ill—very ill—grief and surprise, and *now* I will say despair, have overcome me!—All, all, you have laid down as conjecture, appears to *me now* to be *more* than conjecture!

Oh, that your mother would have the goodness to permit me the presence of the only comforter that my afflicted, my half-broken heart, could be raised by. But I charge you, think not of coming up without her indulgent permission. I am too ill at present, my dear, to think of combating with this dreadful man; and of flying from this horrid house!—*My bad writing will show you this.*—But my illness will be my present security, should he indeed have meditated villany. —Forgive, oh, forgive me, my dearest friend, the trouble I have given you!—All must soon—but why add I grief to grief, and trouble to trouble?—But I charge you, my beloved creature, not to think of coming up without your mother's leave, to the truly desolate and broken-spirited

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

WELL, Jack!—And what thinkest thou of this last letter? Miss Howe values not either *fame* or *censure;* and thinkest thou that this letter will not bring the little fury up, though she could procure no other conveyance than her higgler's panniers, one for herself, the other for her maid? She knows whither to come now. Many a little villain have I punished for knowing more than I would have her know, and that by adding to her knowledge and experience. What thinkest thou, Belford, if by getting hither this virago, and giving *cause* for a lamentable letter from her to the fair

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fugitive, I should be able to recover *her?* Would she not visit that friend in *her* distress, thinkest thou, whose intended visit to her in *hers* brought her into the condition from which she herself had so perfidiously escaped?

Let me enjoy the thought!

Shall I send this letter?—Thou seest I have left room, if I fail in the exact imitation of so charming a hand, to avoid too strict a scrutiny. Do they not both deserve it of me? Seest thou not how the raving girl threatens her mother? Ought she not to be punished? And can I be a worse devil, or villain, or monster, than she calls me in the long letter I enclose (and has called me in her former letters), were I to punish them both as my vengeance urges me to punish them? And when I have executed that my vengeance, how charmingly satisfied may they both go down into the country and keep house together, and have a much better reason than their pride could give them, for living the single life they have both seemed so fond of!

I will set about transcribing it this moment, I think. I can resolve afterwards. Yet what has poor Hickman done to deserve this of me!—But gloriously would it punish the mother (as well as daughter) for all her sordid avarice; and for her undutifulness to honest Mr. Howe, whose heart she actually broke. I am on tiptoe, Jack, to enter upon this project. Is not one country as good to me as another, if I should be obliged to take another tour upon it?

But I will not venture. Hickman is a good man, they tell me. I love a good man. I hope one of these days to be a good man myself. Besides, I have heard within this week something of this honest fellow that shows he has a soul; when I thought, if he had one, that it lay a little of the deepest to emerge to notice, except on very extraordinary occasions; and that then it presently sunk again into its *cellula adiposa.*—The man is a *plump man.*—Didst ever see him, Jack?

But the principal reason that withholds me [for 'tis a tempting project?] is, for fear of being utterly blown up,

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if I should not be quick enough with my letter, or if Miss Howe should deliberate on setting out, to try her mother's consent first; in which time a letter from my frighted beauty might reach her; for I have no doubt, wherever she has refuged, but her first work was to write to her vixen friend. I will therefore go on patiently; and take my revenge upon the little fury at my leisure.

But in spite of my compassion for Hickman, whose better character is sometimes my envy, and who is one of those mortals that bring clumsiness into credit with the *mothers*, to the disgrace of us clever fellows, and often to our disappointment, with the *daughters*: and who has been very busy in assisting these double-armed beauties against me; I swear by all the *dii majores*, as well as *minores*, that I will have Miss Howe, if I cannot have her more exalted friend! And then, if there be as much flaming love between these girls as they pretend, what will my charmer profit by her escape?

And now that I shall permit Miss Howe to reign a little longer, let me ask thee, if thou hast not, in the enclosed letter, a fresh instance, that a great many of my difficulties with her sister-toast are owing to this flighty girl?—'Tis true that here was naturally a confounded sharp winter air; and if a little cold water was thrown into the path, no wonder that it was instantly frozen; and that the poor honest traveller found it next to impossible to keep his way; one foot sliding back as fast as the other advanced, to the endangering of his limbs or neck. But yet I think it impossible that she should have baffled me as she has done (novice as she is, and never before from under her parent's wings) had she not been armed by a virago, who was formerly very near showing that she could better advise than practise. But this, I believe, I have said more than once before.

I am loth to reproach *myself*, now the cruel creature has escaped me. For what would that do, but add to my torment? since evils self-caused, and avoidable, admit not of palliation or comfort. And yet, if *thou* tellest me, that all *her* strength was owing to *my* weakness, and that I have been a cursed coward in this whole affair; why then, Jack,

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I may blush, and be vexed; but, by my soul, I cannot contradict thee.

But this, Belford, I hope—that if I can turn the poison of the enclosed letter into wholesome aliment; that is to say, if I can make use of it to my advantage; I shall have *thy* free consent to do it.

I am always careful to open covers cautiously, and to preserve seals entire. I will draw out from this cursed letter an alphabet. Nor was Nick Rowe ever half so diligent to learn Spanish, at the Quixote recommendation of a certain peer, as I will be to gain the mastery of this vixen's hand.

—o—

LETTER LVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday Evening, June 8.

AFTER my last, so full of other hopes, the contents of this will surprise you. Oh, my dearest friend, the man has at last proved himself to be a villain!

It was with the utmost difficulty last night, that I preserved myself from the vilest dishonour. He extorted from me a promise of forgiveness, and that I would see him next day as if nothing had happened: but if it were possible to escape from a wretch, who, as I have too much reason to believe, formed a plot to fire the house, to frighten me, almost naked, into his arms, how could I see him next day?

I have escaped—Heaven be praised that I have!—And have now no other concern, than that I fly from the only hope that could have made such a husband tolerable to me; the reconciliation with my friends, so agreeably undertaken by my uncle.

All my present hope is, to find some reputable family, or person of my own sex, who is obliged to go beyond sea, or who lives abroad; I care not whether; but if I might choose, in some one of our American colonies—never to be heard of more by my relations, whom I have so grievously offended.

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Nor let your generous heart be moved at what I write. If I can escape the dreadfullest part of my father's malediction (for the temporary part is already, in a manner, fulfilled, which makes me tremble in apprehension of the other), I shall think the wreck of my worldly fortunes a happy composition.

Neither is there need of the renewal of your so often tendered goodness to me: for I have with me rings and other valuables, that were sent me with my clothes, which will turn into money to answer all I can want, till Providence shall be pleased to put me into some way to help myself, if, for my further punishment, my life is to be lengthened beyond my wishes.

Impute not this scheme, my beloved friend, either to dejection on one hand, or to that romantic turn on the other, which we have supposed generally to obtain with our sex, from fifteen to twenty-two: for, be pleased to consider my unhappy situation, in the light in which it really must appear to every considerate person who knows it. In the first place, the man who has had the assurance to think me, and to endeavour to make me, his *property*, will hunt me from place to place, and search after me as a stray: and he knows he may do so with impunity; for whom have I to protect me from him.

Then as to my estate, the envied estate, which has been the original cause of all my misfortunes, it shall never be mine upon litigated terms. What is there in being enabled to boast that I am worth more than *I can use*, or *wish to use?* And if my power is circumscribed, I shall not have that to answer for, which I should have, if I did not use it as I ought: which very few do. I shall have no husband, of whose interest I ought to be so regardful, as to prevent me doing *more* than justice to others, that I may not do *less* for him. If therefore my father will be pleased (as I shall presume, in proper time, to propose to him) to pay two annuities out of it, one to my dear Mrs. Norton, which may make her easy for the remainder of her life, as she is now growing into years; the other of 50*l. per annum*, to the same

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good woman, for the use of *my poor*, as I had the vanity to call a certain set of people, concerning whom she knows all my mind; that so as few as possible may suffer by the consequences of my error; God bless them, and give them heart's ease and content, with the rest!

Other reasons for my taking the step I have hinted at, are these.

This wicked man knows I have no friend in the world but you: your neighbourhood therefore would be the first he would seek for me in, were you to think it possible for me to be concealed in it: and in this case you might be subjected to inconveniences greater even than those which you have already sustained on my account.

For my cousin Morden, were he to come, I could not hope protection; since, by his letter to me, it is evident that my brother has engaged him in his party: nor would I, by any means, subject so worthy a man to danger; as might be the case, from the violence of this ungovernable spirit.

These things considered, what better method can I take than to go abroad to some one of the English colonies; where nobody but yourself shall know anything of me; nor you, let me tell you, presently, nor till I am fixed, and (if it please God) in a course of living tolerably to my mind? For it is no small part of my concern, that my indiscretions have laid so heavy a tax upon you, my dear friend, to whom, once, I hoped to give more pleasure than pain.

I am at present at one Mrs. Moore's at Hampstead. My heart misgave me at coming to this village, because I had been here with him more than once; but the coach hither was so ready a conveniency, that I knew not what to do better. Then I shall stay here no longer than till I can receive your answer to this: in which you will be pleased to let me know, if I cannot be hid, according to your former contrivance [happy, had I given into it at the time!] by Mrs. Townsend's assistance, till the heat of his search be over. The Deptford road, I imagine, will be the right direction to hear of a passage, and to get safely aboard.

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Oh, why was the great fiend of all unchained, and permitted to assume so specious a form, and yet allowed to conceal his feet and his talons, till with the one he was ready to trample upon my honour, and to strike the other into my heart!—And what had I done, that he should be let loose particularly upon me!

Forgive me this murmuring question, the effect of my impatience, my *guilty* impatience, I doubt: for, as I have escaped with my honour, and nothing but my worldly prospects, and my pride, my ambition, and my vanity, have suffered in this wreck of my hopefuller fortunes, may I not still be more happy than I deserve to be? And is it not in my own power still, by the Divine favour, to secure the great stake of all? And who knows but that this very path into which my inconsideration has thrown me, strewed as it is with briars and thorns, which tear in pieces my gaudier trappings, may not be the right path to lead me into the great road to my future happiness; which might have been endangered by evil communication?

And after all, are there not still more deserving persons than I, who never failed in any capital point of duty, that have been more humbled than myself; and some too, by the errors of parents and relations, by the tricks and baseness of guardians and trustees, and in which their own rashness or folly had no part?

I will then endeavour to make the best of my present lot. And join with me, my best, my only friend, in praying that my punishment may end here; and that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me.

This letter will enable you to account for a line or two, which I sent to Wilson's to be carried to you, only for a feint, to get his servant out of the way. He seemed to be left, as I thought, for a spy upon me. But he returning too soon, I was forced to write a few lines for him to carry to his master, to a tavern near Doctors Commons, with the same view: and this happily answered my end.

I wrote early in the morning a bitter letter to the wretch, which I left for him obvious enough; and I suppose he has

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it by this time. I kept no copy of it. I shall recollect the contents, and give you the particulars of all, at more leisure.

I am sure you will approve of my escape—the rather, as the people of the house must be very vile: for they, and that Dorcas too, did hear me (I know they did) cry out for help: if the fire had been other than a villainous plot (although in the morning, to blind them, I pretended to think it otherwise) they would have been alarmed as much as I; and have run in, hearing me scream, to *comfort me*, supposing my terror was the fire; to *relieve me*, supposing it were anything else. But the vile Dorcas went away as soon as she saw the wretch throw his arms about me!—Bless me, my dear, I had only my slippers and an under-petticoat on. I was frighted out of my bed, by her cries of fire; and that I should be burnt to ashes in a moment—and she to go away, and never to return, nor anybody else! And yet I heard women's voices in the next room; indeed I did—an evident contrivance of them all:—God be praised, I am out of their house!

My terror is not yet over: I can hardly think myself safe: every well-dressed man I see from my windows, whether on horseback or on foot, I think to be him.

I know you will expedite an answer. A man and horse will be procured me to-morrow early, to carry this. To be sure, you cannot return an answer by the same man, because you must see Mrs. Townsend first: nevertheless, I shall wait with impatience till you *can*; having no friend but you to apply to; and being such a stranger to this part of the world, that I know not which way to turn myself; whither to go; nor what to do.—What a dreadful hand have I made of it!

Mrs. Moore, at whose house I am, is a widow, and of good character: and of this one of her neighbours, of whom I bought a handkerchief, purposely to make inquiry before I would venture, informed me.

I will not set my foot out of doors, till I have your direction: and I am the more secure, having dropt words to the people of the house where the coach set me down, as if I expected a chariot to meet me in my way to Hendon; a

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village a little distance from this. And when I left their house, I walked backward and forward upon the hill; at first, not knowing what to do; and afterwards, to be certain that I was not watched before I ventured to inquire after a lodging.

You will direct for me, my dear, by the name of Mrs. Harriot Lucas.

Had I not made my escape when I did, I was resolved to attempt it again and again. He was gone to the Commons for a license, as he wrote me word; for I refused to see him, notwithstanding the promise he extorted from me.

How hard, how next to impossible, my dear, to avoid many *lesser* deviations, when we are betrayed into a *capital* one!

For fear I should not get away at my first effort, I had apprised him that I would not set eye upon him under a week, in order to gain myself time for it in different ways. And were I so to have been watched as to have made it necessary, I would, after such an instance of the connivance of the women of the house, have run out into the street, and thrown myself into the next house I could have entered, or claim protection from the first person I had met—*Women to desert the cause of a poor creature of their own sex, in such a situation, what must they be!*—Then, such poor guilty sort of figures did they make in the morning after he was gone out—so earnest to get me up stairs, and to convince me, by the scorched window-boards, and burnt curtains and vallens, that the fire was real—that (although I seemed to believe all they would have me believe) I was more and more resolved to get out of their house at all adventures.

When I began, I thought to write but a few lines. But, be my subject what it will, I know not how to conclude when I write to *you*. It was *always* so: it is not therefore owing peculiarly to that most interesting and unhappy situation, which you will allow, however, to engross at present the whole mind of

Your unhappy, but ever affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

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LETTER LVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday Morning, past two o'clock.

Io Triumphe!—Io Clarissa, sing!—Once more, what a happy man thy friend!—A silly dear novice, to be heard to tell the coachman where to carry her!—And to go to *Hampstead*, of all the villages about London!—The place where we had been together more than once!

Methinks I am sorry she managed no better!—I shall find the recovery of her too easy a task, I fear! Had she but known how much difficulty enhances the value of anything with me, and had she had the least notion of obliging me by it, she would never have stopt short at *Hampstead*, surely.

Well, but after all this exultation, thou wilt ask, If I have already got back my charmer?—I have not:—but knowing where she is, is almost the same thing as having her in my power. And it delights me to think how she will start and tremble when I first pop upon her! How she will look with conscious guilt, that will more than wipe off my guilt of Wednesday night, when she sees her injured lover, and acknowledged husband, from whom, the greatest of felonies, she would have stolen herself.

But thou wilt be impatient to know how I came by my lights. Read the enclosed here, and remember the instructions which from time to time, as I have told thee, I have given my fellow, in apprehension of such an elopement; and that will tell thee all, and what I may reasonably expect from the rascal's diligence and management, if he wishes ever to see my face again.

I received it about half an hour ago, just as I was going to lie down in my clothes, and it has made me so much alive, that, midnight as it is, I have sent for a Blunt's chariot, to attend me here by day peep, with *my usual coachman*, if possible; and knowing not what else to do with myself, I sat down, and in the joy of my heart, have not only written thus far, but have concluded upon the measures I shall take

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when admitted to her presence: for well am I aware of the difficulties I shall have to contend with from her perverseness.

HONNORED SUR,—This is to sertifie your Honner, as how I am heer at Hamestet, where I have found out my lady to be in logins at one Mrs. Moore's, near upon Hamestet Hethe. And I have so ordered matters, that her ladiship cannot stur but I must have notice of her goins and comins. As I knowed I durst not look into your Honner's fase, if I had not found out my lady, thoff she was gone off the prems's in a quarter of an hour, as a man may say; so I knowed you would be glad at hart to know I have found her out: and so I send thiss Petur Patrick, who is to have five shillings, it being now near twelve of the clock at nite; for he would not stur without a hearty drink too besides: and I was willing all shulde be snug likeways at the logins before I sent.

I have munny of youre Honner's; but I thought as how, if the man was payed by me beforend, he mought play trix; so left that to your Honner.

My lady knows nothing of my being hereaway. But I thoute it best not to leve the plase, because she has taken the logins but for a fue nites.

If your Honner come to the Upper Flax, I will be in site all the day about the tapp-house or the Hethe. I have borroued another cote, instead of your Honner's liferie, and a blacke wigg; so cannot be knoen by my lady, iff as howe she shuld see me: and have made as if I had the tooth-ake; so with my hancriffe at my mothe, the teth which your Honner was pleased to bett out with your Honner's fyste, and my dam'd wide mothe, as your Honner notifys it to be, cannot be knoen to be mine.

The two inner letters I had from my lady, before she went off the prems's. One was to be left at Mr. Wilson's for Miss Howe. The next was to be for your Honner. But I knowed you was not at the plase directed; and being afeared of what fell out, so I kept them for your Honner, and so could not give um to you, until I seed you. Miss How's I only made belief to her ladiship as I carried it, and

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sed as how there was nothing left for hur, as she wished to knoe: so here they be bothe.

I am, may it please your Honner,
Your Honner's most dutiful,
And, wonce more, happy servant,
WM. SUMMERS.

THE two *inner* letters, as Will. calls them, 'tis plain, were written for no other purpose, but to send him out of the way with them, and one of them to amuse me. That directed to Miss Howe is only this:—

Thursday, June 8.

I WRITE this, my dear Miss Howe, only for a feint, and to see if it will go current. I shall write at large very soon, if not miserably prevented!!!

CL. H.

Now, Jack, will not *her feints* justify *mine!* Does she not invade my province, thinkest thou? And is it not now fairly come to—*Who shall most deceive and cheat the other?* So, I thank my stars, we are upon a par at last, as to this point, which is a great ease to my conscience, thou must believe. And if what Hudibras tells us is true, the dear fugitive has also abundance of pleasure to come.

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
In being cheated, as to cheat.
As lookers-on find most delight,
Who least perceive the juggler's sleight;
And still the less they understand,
The more admire the sleight of hand.

This my dear juggler's letter to me; the other *inner* letter sent by Will.

Thursday, June 8.

MR. LOVELACE,—Do not give me cause to dread your return. If you would not that I should hate you for ever, send me half a line by the bearer, to assure me that you will not attempt to see me for a week to come. I cannot look you in the face without equal confusion and indignation.

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The obliging me in this, is but a poor atonement for your last night's vile behaviour.

You may pass this time in a journey to Lord M.'s; and I cannot doubt, if the ladies of your family are as favourable to me, as you have assured me they are, but that you will have interest enough to prevail with one of them to oblige me with their company. After your baseness of last night, you will not wonder that I insist upon this proof of your future honour.

If Captain Tomlinson comes meantime, I can hear what he has to say, and send you an account of it.

But in less than a week if you see me, it must be owing to a fresh act of violence, of which you know not the consequence.

Send me the requested line, if ever you expect to have the forgiveness confirmed, the promise of which you extorted from

The unhappy

CL. H.

Now, Belford, what canst thou say in behalf of this sweet rogue of a lady? What *canst* thou say for her? 'Tis apparent that she was fully determined upon an elopement when she wrote it. And thus would she make me of party against myself, by drawing me in to give her a week's time to complete it. And, more wicked still, send me upon a fool's errand to bring up one of my cousins.—When we came to have the satisfaction of finding her gone off, and me exposed for ever!—What punishment can be bad enough for such a little villain of a lady?

But mind, moreover, how plausibly she accounts by this billet (supposing she should not find an opportunity of eloping before I returned), for the resolution of not seeing me for a week; and for the bread and butter expedient!—So childish as we thought it!

The chariot is not come; and if it were, it is yet too soon for everything but my impatience. And as I have already taken all my measures, and can think of nothing but my triumph, I will resume her violent letter, in order to

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strengthen my resolutions against her. I was *before* in too gloomy a way to proceed with it. But now the subject is all alive to me, and my gayer fancy, like the sunbeams, will irradiate it, and turn the solemn deep-green into a brighter verdure.

When I have called upon my charmer to explain some parts of her letter, and to atone for others, I will send it, or a copy of it, to thee.

Suffice it at present to tell thee, in the first place, that *she is determined never to be my mife.*—To be sure there ought to be no compulsion in so material a case. Compulsion was her parents' fault, which I have censured so severely, that I shall hardly be guilty of the same. I am therefore glad I know her mind as to this essential point.

I have *ruined* her! she says.—Now that's a fib, take it her own way—if I had, she would not, perhaps, have run away from me.

She is *thrown upon the wide world!* Now I own that Hampstead Heath affords very pretty and very *extensive* prospects; but 'tis not the *wide world* neither. And suppose that to be her grievance, I hope soon to restore her to a *narrower.*

I am the *enemy of her soul, as well as of her honour!*—Confoundedly severe! Nevertheless, another fib!—For I love her soul very well; but think no more of it in this case than of my own.

She is to be *thrown upon strangers!*—And is not that her own fault?—Much against my will, I am sure!

She is cast from a state of *independency* into one of *obligation.* She never was in a state of *independency;* nor is it fit a woman should, of any age, or in any state of life. And as to the state of obligation, there is no such thing as living without being beholden to somebody. Mutual obligation is the very essence and soul of the social and commercial life.—Why should she be exempt from it? I am sure the person she raves at desires not such an exemption; has been long *dependent* upon her; and would rejoice to owe *further obligations* to her than he can boast of hitherto.

She talks of her *father's curse!*—But have I not repaid

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him for it a hundred fold in the same coin? But why must the faults of other people be laid at my door? Have I not enow of my own?

But the grey-eyed dawn begins to peep—let me sum up all.

In short, then, the dear creature's letter is a collection of invectives not very new to *me*; though the occasion for them, no doubt, is new to *her*. A little sprinkling of the romantic and contradictory runs through it. She loves, and she hates; she encourages me to pursue her, by telling me I safely may; and yet she begs I will not. She apprehends poverty and want, yet resolves to give away her estate. To gratify whom? —Why, in short, those who have been the cause of her misfortunes. And, finally, though she resolves never to be mine, yet she has some regrets at leaving me, because of the opening prospects of a reconciliation with her friends.

But never did morning dawn so tardily as this!—Neither is the chariot yet come.

A GENTLEMAN to speak with me, Dorcas?—Who can want me thus early?

Captain Tomlinson, sayest thou? Surely he must have travelled all night! Early riser as I am, how could he think to find me up *thus* early?

Let but the chariot come, and he shall accompany me in it to the bottom of the hill (though he returns to town on foot; for the captain is all obliging goodness), that I may hear all he has to say, and tell him all my mind, and lose no time.

Well, now I am satisfied that this rebellious flight will turn to my advantage, as all crushed rebellions do to the advantage of a sovereign in possession.

DEAR Captain, I rejoice to see you—just in the nick of time—See! See!

> The rosy-fingered morn appears,
> And from her mantle shakes her tears:
> The sun arising mortals cheers,
> And drives the rising mists away,
> In promise of a glorious day.

Excuse me, sir, that I salute you from my favourite bard.

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He that rises with the lark shall sing with the lark. Strange news since I saw you, Captain!—Poor mistaken lady!—But you have too much goodness, I know, to reveal to her uncle Harlowe the errors of this capricious beauty. It will all turn out for the best. You must accompany me part of the way. I know the delight you take in composing differences. But 'tis the task of the prudent to heal the breeches made by the rashness and folly of the imprudent.

And now (all around me so still and so silent), the rattling of the chariot wheels at a street's distance do I hear! And to this angel of a woman I fly!

Reward, O God of Love! [The cause is thy own!] Reward thou, as it deserves, my suffering perseverance!—Succeed my endeavours to bring back to thy obedience this charming fugitive! Make her acknowledge her rashness; repent her insults; implore my forgiveness; beg to be reinstated in my favour, and that I will bury in oblivion the remembrance of her heinous offence against thee, and against me, thy faithful votary.

The chariot at the door!—I come! I come!
I attend you, good Captain——
Indeed, sir——
Pray, sir—civility is not ceremony.

And now, dressed like a bridegroom, my heart elated beyond that of the most desiring one (attended by a footman whom my beloved never saw), I am already at Hampstead!

—o—

LETTER LVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Upper Flask, Hampstead, *Friday Morning, 7 o'clock (June 9).*

I am now here, and here have been this hour and half.—What an industrious spirit have I!—Nobody can say that I eat the bread of idleness. I take true pains for all the plea-

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sure I enjoy. I cannot but admire myself strangely; for certainly, with this active soul, I should have made a very great figure in whatever station I had filled. But had I been a prince (to be sure I should have made a most *noble* prince!) I should have led up a military dance equal to that of the great Macedonian. I should have added kingdom to kingdom, and despoiled all my neighbour sovereigns, in order to have obtained the name of *Robert the Great!* And I would have gone to war with the great Turk, and the Persian, and Mogul, for the seraglios; for not one of those eastern monarchs should have had a pretty woman to bless himself with till I had done with her.

And now I have so much leisure upon my hands, that after having informed myself of all necessary particulars, I am set to my shorthand writing in order to keep up with time as well as I can; for the subject is now become worthy of me; and it is yet too soon, I doubt, to pay my compliments to my charmer, after all her fatigues for two or three days past. And, moreover, I have abundance of matters preparative to my future proceedings to recount, in order to connect and render all intelligible.

I parted with the Captain at the foot of the hill, trebly instructed; that is to say, as to the *fact*, to the *probable*, and to the *possible*. If my beloved and I can meet, and make up without the mediating of this *worthy* gentleman, it will be so much the better. As little foreign aid as possible in my amorous conflicts has always been a rule with me: though here I have been obliged to call in so much. And who knows but it may be the better for the lady the less she makes necessary? I cannot bear that she should sit so indifferent to me as to be in earnest to part with me for ever upon so *slight*, or even upon *any* occasion. *If I find she is*—but no more threatenings till she is in my power —thou knowest what I have vowed.

All Will.'s account, from the lady's flight to his finding her again, all the accounts of the people of the house, the coachman's information to Will., and so forth, collected together, stand thus:

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'The Hampstead coach, when the dear fugitive came to 'it, had but two passengers in it. But she made the fellow 'go off directly, paying for the vacant places.

'The two passengers directing the coachman to set them 'down at the Upper Flask, she bid him set her down there also.

'They took leave of her [very respectfully, no doubt], 'and she went into the house, and asked if she could not 'have a dish of tea, and a room to herself for half an hour.

'They showed her up to the very room where I now am. 'She sat at the very table I now write upon; and, I believe, 'the chair I sit in was hers.' O Belford, if thou knowest what love is, thou wilt be able to account for these *minutiæ*.

'She seemed spiritless and fatigued. The gentlewoman 'herself chose to attend so genteel and lovely a guest. She 'asked her if she would have bread and butter with her tea?

'No. She could not eat.

'They had very good biscuits.

'As she pleased.

'The gentlewoman stept out for some, and returning on 'a sudden, she observed the sweet fugitive endeavouring to 'restrain a violent burst of grief to which she had given 'way in that little interval.

'However, when the tea came, she made the landlady sit 'down with her, and asked her abundance of questions, 'about the villages and roads in the neighbourhood.

'The gentlewoman took notice to her, *that she seemed to 'be troubled in mind.*

'Tender spirits, she replied, could not part with *dear 'friends* without concern.'

She meant *me*, no doubt.

'She made no inquiry about a lodging, though by the 'sequel, thou'lt observe that she seemed to intend to go no 'farther that night than Hampstead. But after she had 'drank two dishes, and put a biscuit in her pocket [sweet 'soul! to serve for her supper, perhaps], she laid down half-'a-crown; and refusing change, sighing, took leave, saying 'she would proceed towards Hendon; the distance to which 'had been one of her questions.

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'They offered to send to know if a Hampstead coach 'were not to go to Hendon that evening.

'No matter, she said—perhaps she might meet the 'chariot.'

Another of her *feints*, I suppose: for how, or with whom, could anything of this sort have been concerted since yesterday morning?

'She had, as the people took notice to one another, 'something so uncommonly noble in her air, and in her 'person and behaviour, that they were sure she was of 'quality. And having no servant with her of either sex, 'her eyes, [her fine eyes, the gentlewoman called them, 'stranger as she was, and a woman!] being swelled and 'red, they were sure there was an elopement in the case, 'either from parents or guardians; for they supposed her 'too young and too maidenly to be a married lady; and 'were she married, no husband would let such a fine young 'creature be unattended and alone; nor give her cause for 'so much grief, as seemed to be settled in her countenance. 'Then at times she seemed to be so bewildered, they said, 'that they were afraid she had it in her head to make away 'with herself.

'All these things put together excited their curiosity; 'and they engaged a *peery* servant, as they called a foot-'man who was drinking with Kit. the hostler, at the 'tap-house, to watch all her motions. This fellow re-'ported the following particulars, as they were re-reported 'to me:

'She indeed went towards Hendon, passing by the sign 'of the Castle on the Heath; then, stopping, looked about 'her, and down into the valley before her. Then, turning 'her face towards London, she seemed, by the motion of 'her handkerchief to her eyes, to weep; repenting [who 'knows?] the rash step she had taken, and wishing herself 'back again.'

Better for her, if she do, Jack, once more I say!—Woe be to the girl who could think of marrying me, yet to be able to run away from me, and renounce me for ever!

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'Then, continuing on a few paces, she stopt again—and 'as if disliking her road, again seeming to weep, directed 'her course back towards Hampstead.'

I am glad she wept so much, because no heart bursts (be the occasion for the sorrow what it will), which has that kindly relief. Hence I hardly ever am moved at the sight of these pellucid fugitives in a fine woman. How often, in the past twelve hours, have I wished that I could cry most confoundedly?

'She then saw a coach and four driving towards her 'empty. She crossed the path she was in, as if to meet it, 'and seemed to intend to speak to the coachman, had he 'stopt or spoken first. He as earnestly looked at *her*.— 'Every one did so who passed her (so the man who dogged 'her was the less suspected.')—Happy rogue of a coachman, hadst thou known whose notice thou didst engage, and whom thou mightest have obliged!—It was the divine Clarissa Harlowe at whom thou gazedst!—Mine own Clarissa Harlowe!—But it was well for me that thou wert as undistinguishing as the beasts thou drovest; otherwise, what a wild-goose chase had I been led?

'The lady, as well as the coachman, in short, seemed to 'want resolution;—the horses kept on—[the fellow's head 'and eyes, no doubt, turned behind him], and the distance 'soon lengthened beyond recall. With a wistful eye she 'looked after him; sighed and wept again; as the servant 'who then slyly passed her, observed.

'By this time she had reached the houses. She looked 'up at every one as she passed; now and then breathing 'upon her bared hand, and applying it to her swelled eyes, 'to abate the redness, and dry the tears. At last, seeing a 'bill up for letting lodgings, she walked backwards and 'forwards half a dozen times, as if unable to determine 'what to do. And then went farther into the town, and 'there the fellow, being spoken to by one of his familiars, 'lost her for a few minutes: but he soon saw her come out 'of a linen-drapery shop, attended with a servant-maid, 'having, as he believed, bought some little matters, and, as

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'it proved, got that maid-servant to go with her to the 'house she is now at.*

'The fellow, after waiting about an hour, and not seeing 'her come out, returned, concluding that she had taken 'lodgings there.'

And here, supposing my narrative of the dramatic kind, ends Act the first. And now begins

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Hampstead Heath continued.*

Enter my RASCAL.

WILL. having got at all these particulars, by exchanging others as frankly against them, with which I had formerly prepared him both verbally and in writing.—I found the people already of my party, and full of good wishes for my success, repeating to me all they told him.

But he had first acquainted me with the accounts he had given them of his lady and me. It is necessary that I give thee the particulars of his tale, and I have a little time upon my hands: for the maid of the house, who had been out of an errand tells us, that she saw Mrs. Moore [with whom must be my first business] go into the house of a young gentleman, within a few doors of her, who has a maiden sister, Miss Rawlins by name, *so notified* for prudence, that none of her acquaintance undertake anything of consequence without consulting her.

Meanwhile my honest coachman is walking about Miss Rawlins's door, in order to bring me notice of Mrs. Moore's return to her own house. I hope her gossip's tale will be as soon told as mine—which take as follows:—

Will. told them, before I came, 'That his lady was but 'lately married to one of the finest gentlemen in the world. 'But that he, being very gay and lively, she was *mortal* 'jealous of him; and, in a fit of that sort, had eloped from 'him. For although she loved him dearly, and he doated

* See Letter LVI. of this volume.

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'upon her (as well he might, since, as they had seen, she 'was the finest creature *that ever the sun shone upon*), yet 'she was apt to be very wilful and sullen, if he might take 'the liberty to say so—but truth was truth;—and if she 'could not have her own way in everything, would be for 'leaving him. That she had three or four times played his 'master such tricks; but with all the virtue and innocence 'in the world; running away to an intimate friend of hers, 'who, though a young lady of honour, was but too indul-'gent to her in this *only* failing; for which reason his 'master had brought her to London lodgings; their usual 'residence being in the country: and that, on his refusing 'to satisfy her about a lady he had been seen with in St. 'James's Park, she had, for the first time since she came to 'town, served his master thus, whom he had left half dis-'tracted on that account.'

And truly well he might, poor gentleman! cried the honest folks, pitying me before they saw me.

'He told them how he came by his intelligence of her; 'and made himself such an interest with them, that they 'helped him to a change of clothes for himself; and the 'landlord, at his request, privately inquired if the lady 'actually remained at Mrs. Moore's, and for how long she 'had taken the lodgings?—which he found only to be for a 'week certain; but she had said that she believed she 'should hardly stay so long. And then it was that he wrote 'his letter, and sent it by honest Peter Patrick, as thou hast 'heard.'

When I came, my person and dress having answered Will.'s description, the people were ready to worship me. I now and then sighed, now and then put on a lighter air; which, however, I designed should show more of vexation ill-disguised, than of real cheerfulness; and they told Will. it was a thousand pities so fine a lady should have such *skittish tricks;* adding, that she might expose herself to great dangers by them; for that there were rakes everywhere—[*Lovelaces in every corner, Jack!*], and many about that town, who would leave nothing unattempted to get into her com-

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pany; and although they might not prevail upon her, yet might they nevertheless hurt her reputation; and, in time, estrange the affections of so fine a gentleman from her.

Good sensible people these!—Hey, Jack!

Here, landlord, one word with you.—My servant, I find, has acquainted you with the reason of my coming this way. —An unhappy affair, landlord! A very unhappy affair!— But never was there a more virtuous woman.

So, sir, she seems to be. A thousand pities her ladyship has such ways—and to so good-humoured a gentleman as you seem to be, sir.

Mother-spoilt, landlord!—Mother-spoilt!—that's the thing!—But [sighing] I must make the best of it. What I want *you* to do for me is to lend me a great-coat.—I care not what it is. If my spouse should see me at a distance, she would make it very difficult for me to get at her speech. A great-coat with a cape, if you have one. I must come upon her before she is aware.

I am afraid, sir, I have none fit for such a gentleman as you.

Oh, anything will do!—The worse the better.

Exit Landlord.—Re-enter with two great-coats.

Ay, landlord, this will be best; for I can button the cape over the lower part of my face. Don't I look devilishly down and concerned, landlord?

I never saw a gentleman with a better-natured look.—'Tis pity you should have such trials, sir.

I must be very unhappy, no doubt of it, landlord.—And yet I am a little pleased, you must needs think, that I have found her out before any great inconvenience has arisen to her. However, if I cannot break her of these freaks, she'll break my heart; for I do love her with all her failings.

The good woman, who was within hearing of all this, pitied me much.

Pray, your honour, said she, if I may be so bold, was madam ever a mamma?

No—[and I sighed].—We have been but a little while

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married; and as I may say to *you*, it is her own fault that she is not in that way. [Not a word of a lie in this, Jack.] But to tell you truth, Madam, she may be compared to the dog in the manger ——

I understand you, sir [simpering], she is but young, sir. I have heard of one or two such skittish young ladies, in my time, sir.—But when madam is in that way, I daresay, as she loves you (and it would be strange if she did not!) all this will be over, and she may make the best of wives.

That's all my hope.

She is a fine lady as I ever beheld.—I hope, sir, you won't be too severe. She'll get over all these freaks, if once she be a mamma, I warrant.

I can't be severe to her—she knows that. The moment I see her, all resentment is over with me, if she give me but one kind look.

All this time I was adjusting my horseman's coat, and Will. was putting in the ties of my wig,* and buttoning the cape over my chin.

I asked the gentlewoman for a little powder. She brought me a powder-box, and I slightly shook the puff over my hat, and flapped one side of it, though the lace looked a little too gay for my covering; and slouching it over my eyes, Shall I be known, think you, Madam?

Your honour is so expert, sir!—I wish, if I may be so bold, your lady has not some *cause* to be jealous. But it will be impossible, if you keep your laced clothes covered, that anybody should know you in that dress to be the same gentleman—except they find you out by your clocked stockings.

Well observed.—Can't you, landlord, lend or sell me a pair of stockings, that will draw over these? I can cut off the feet, if they won't go into my shoes.

He could let me have a pair of coarse, but clean, stirrup stockings, if I pleased.

The best in the world for the purpose.

He fetched them. Will. drew them on; and my legs then made a good gouty appearance.

* The fashionable wigs at that time.

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The good woman, smiling, wished me success; and so did the landlord. And as thou knowest that I am not a bad mimic, I took a cane, which I borrowed of the landlord, and stooped in the shoulders to a quarter of a foot of less height, and stumped away cross to the bowling-green, to practise a little the hobbling gait of a gouty man.—The landlady whispered her husband, as Will. tells me, He's a good one, I warrant him—I daresay the fault lies not at all of one side.. While mine host replied, That I was so lively and so good-natured a gentleman, that he did not know who could be angry with me, do what I would. A sensible fellow!—I wish my charmer were of the same opinion.

And now I am going to try if I can't agree with goody Moore for lodgings and other conveniences for my sick wife.

'Wife, Lovelace?' methinks thou interrogatest.

Yes, *wife*, for who knows what cautions the dear fugitive may have given in apprehension of me?

'But has goody Moore any other lodgings to let?'

Yes, yes; I have taken care of that; and find that she has just such conveniences as I want. And I know that my wife will like them. For, although married, I can do everything I please; and that's a bold word, you know. But had she only a garret to let, I would have liked it; and been a poor author afraid of arrests, and made that my place of refuge; yet would have made shift to pay beforehand for what I had. I can suit myself to any condition, that's my comfort.

THE widow Moore returned! say you?—Down, down, flutterer!—This impertinent heart is more troublesome to me than my conscience, I think.—I shall be obliged to hoarsen my voice, and roughen my character, to keep up with its puppily dancings.

But let me see, shall I be angry or pleased when I am admitted to my beloved's presence?

Angry, to be sure.—Has she not broken her word with me?—At a time too when I was meditating to do her grateful justice?—And is not breach of word a dreadful

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crime in good folks?—I have ever been for forming my judgment of the nature of things and actions, not so much from what they are in themselves, as from the character of the actors. Thus it would be as odd a thing in such as we to *keep* our words with a woman, as it would be wicked in her to *break* hers to us.

Seest thou not that this unseasonable gravity is admitted to quell the palpitations of this unmanageable heart? But still it will go on with its boundings. I'll try as I ride in my chariot to *tranquillise.*

'Ride, Bob! so little a way?'

Yes, ride, Jack; for am I not lame? And will it not look well to have a lodger who keeps his chariot? What widow, what servant, asks questions of a man with an equipage?

My coachman, as well as my other servant, is under Will.'s tuition.

Never was there such a hideous rascal as he has made himself. The devil only and his *other* master can know him. They both have set their marks upon him. As to my honour's mark, it will never be out of *his damned wide mothe,* as he calls it. For the dog will be hanged before he can lose the rest of his teeth by age.

I am gone.

LETTER LIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Hampstead, Friday Night, June 9.

Now, Belford, for the narrative of narratives. I will continue it as I have opportunity; and that so dexterously, that, if I break off twenty times, thou shalt not discern where I piece my thread.

Although grievously afflicted with the gout, I alighted out of my chariot (leaning very hard on my cane with one hand, and on my new servant's shoulder with the other) the same instant almost that he had knocked at the door, that I might be sure of admission into the house.

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I took care to button my great-coat about me, and to cover with it even the pummel of my sword, it being a little too gay for my years. I knew not what occasion I might have for my sword. I stooped forward; blinked with my eyes to conceal their lustre [no vanity in saying that, Jack]; my chin wrapt up for the toothache; my slouched, laced hat, and so much of my wig as was visible, giving me, all together, the appearance of an antiquated beau.

My wife, I resolved beforehand, should have a complication of disorders.

The maid came to the door. I asked for her mistress. She showed me into one of the parlours; and I sat down with a gouty Oh!—

Enter Goody Moore.

Your servant, Madam—but you must excuse me; I cannot well stand—I find by the bill at the door, that you have lodgings to let [mumbling my words as if, like my man Will., I had lost some of my fore-teeth]: be pleased to inform me what they are; for I like your situation—and I will tell you my family—I have a wife, a good old woman—older than myself, by the way, a pretty deal. She is in a bad state of health, and is advised into the Hampstead air. She will have two maid servants and a footman. The coach or chariot (I shall not have them up both together) we can put up anywhere, and the coachman will be with his horses.

When, sir, shall you want to come in?

I will take them from this very day; and, if convenient, will bring my wife in the afternoon.

Perhaps, sir, you would board as well as lodge?

That as you please. It will save me the trouble of bringing my cook, if we do. And I suppose you have servants who know how to dress a couple of dishes. My wife must eat plain food, and I don't love kick-shaws.

We have a single lady, who will be gone in two or three days. She has one of the best apartments: that will then be at liberty.

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You have one or two good ones meantime, I presume, Madam, just to receive my wife; for we have lost time—these damned physicians—excuse me, Madam, I am not used to curse; but it is owing to the love I have for my wife—they have kept her in hand, till they are ashamed to take more fees, and now advise her to the air. I wish we had sent her hither at first. But we must now make the best of it.

Excuse me, Madam [for she looked hard at me], that I am muffled up in this warm weather. I am but too sensible that I have left my chamber sooner than I ought, and perhaps shall have a return of my gout for it. I came out thus muffled up with a dreadful pain in my jaws; an ague in them, I believe. But my poor dear will not be satisfied with anybody's care but mine. And, as I told you, we have lost time.

You shall see what accommodations I have, if you please, sir. But I doubt you are too lame to walk up stairs.

I can make shift to hobble up now I have rested a little. I'll just look upon the apartment my wife is to have. Anything may do for the servants; and as you seem to be a good sort of gentlewoman, I shan't stand for a price, and will pay well besides for the trouble I shall give.

She led the way; and I, helping myself by the banisters, made shift to get up with less fatigue than I expected from ancles so weak. But oh! Jack, what was Sixtus the Vth's artful depression of his natural powers to mine, when, as the half-dead Montalto, he gaped for the pretendedly unsought pontificate, and the moment he was chosen leapt upon the prancing beast, which it was thought by the amazed conclave he was not able to mount, without help of chairs and men? Never was there a more joyous heart and lighter heels than mine joined together; yet both denied their functions; the one fluttering in secret, ready to burst its bars for relief-ful expression, the others obliged to an hobbling motion; when, unrestrained, they would, in their master's imagination, have mounted him to the lunar world without the help of a ladder.

There were three rooms on a floor: two of them hand-

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some; and the third, she said, still handsomer; but the lady was in it.

I saw, I saw she was! for as I hobbled up, crying out upon my weak ankles, in the hoarse mumbling voice I had assumed, I beheld a little piece of her as she just cast an eye (with the door a-jar, as they call it) to observe who was coming up; and seeing such an old clumsy fellow, great-coated in weather so warm, slouched and muffled up, she withdrew, shutting the door without any emotion. But it was not so with me; for thou canst not imagine how my heart danced to my mouth, at the very glimpse of her; so that I was afraid the thump, thump, thumping villain, which had so lately thumped as much to no purpose, would have choked me.

I liked the lodging well; and the more as she said the third room was still handsomer. I must sit down, Madam [and chose the darkest part of the room]. Won't you take a seat yourself?—No price shall part us—but I will leave the terms to you and my wife, if you please. And also whether for board or not. Only please to take this for earnest, putting a guinea into her hand—and one thing I will say; my poor wife loves money; but is not an ill-natured woman. She was a great fortune to me: but as the real estate goes away at her death, I would fain preserve her for that reason, as well as for the love I bear her as an honest man. But if she makes too close a bargain with you, tell *me;* and unknown to *her*, I will make it up. This is my constant way: she loves to have her pen'orths; and I would not have her vexed or made uneasy on any account.

She said I was a very considerate gentleman; and upon the condition I had mentioned, she was content to leave the terms to my lady.

But, Madam, cannot a body just peep into the other apartment; that I may be more particular to my wife in the furniture of it?

The lady desires to be private, sir—but—and was going to ask her leave.

I caught hold of her arm—However, stay, stay, Madam:

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it mayn't be proper, if the lady loves to be private. Don't let me intrude upon the lady——

No intrusion, sir, I daresay; the lady is good-humoured. She will be so kind as to step down into the parlour, I daresay. As she stays so little a while, I am sure she will not wish to stand in my way.

No, Madam, that's true, if she be good-humoured, as you say—Has she been with you long, Madam?

She came but yesterday, sir——

I believe I just now saw the glimpse of her. She seems to be an elderly lady.

No, sir! you're mistaken. She's a young lady; and one of the handsomest I ever saw.

Not so, I beg her pardon! Not but that I should have liked her the better, were she to stay longer, if she had been elderly. I have a strange taste, Madam, you'll say; but I really, for my wife's sake, love every elderly woman. Indeed I ever thought age was to be reverenced, which made me (taking the fortune into the scale too, *that* I own) make my addresses to my present dear.

Very good of you, sir, to respect age: we all hope to live to be old.

Right, Madam.—But you say the lady is beautiful. Now you must know, that though I choose to converse with the elderly, yet I love to see a beautiful young woman, just as I love to see fine flowers in a garden. There's no casting an eye upon her, is there, without her notice? For in this dress, and thus muffled up about my jaws, I should not care to be seen any more than she, let her love privacy as much as she will.

I will go ask if I may show a gentleman the apartment, sir; and as you are a married gentleman, and not *over* young, she'll perhaps make the less scruple.

Then, like me, she loves elderly folks best perhaps. But it may be she has suffered by young ones.

I fancy she has, sir, or is afraid she shall. She desired to be very private; and if by description inquired after, to be denied.

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Thou art a true woman, goody Moore, thought I.

Good lack—good lack!—What may be her story then, I pray?

She is pretty reserved in her story: but to tell you my thoughts, I believe *love* is in the case: she is always in tears, and does not much care for company.

Nay, Madam, it becomes not me to dive into ladies' secrets; I want not to pry into other people's affairs. But, pray, how does she employ herself?—Yet she came but yesterday; so you can't tell.

Writing continually, sir.

These women, Jack, when you ask them questions by way of information, don't care to be ignorant of anything.

Nay, excuse me, Madam, I am very far from being an inquisitive man. But if her case be difficult, and not merely *love*, as she is a friend of yours, I would give her my advice.

Then you are a lawyer, sir——

Why, indeed, Madam, I was some time at the bar; but I have long left practice; yet am much consulted by my friends in difficult points. In a pauper case I frequently *give* money; but never *take* any from the richest.

You are a very good gentleman, then, sir.

Ay, Madam, we cannot live always here; and we ought to do what good we can—but I hate to appear officious. If the lady stay any time, and think fit, upon better acquaintance, to let me into her case, it may be a happy day for her, if I find it a just one; for, you must know that when I was at the bar, I never was such a sad fellow as to undertake, for the sake of a paltry fee, to make white black, and black white: for what would that have been but to endeavour to establish iniquity by quirks, while I robbed the innocent?

You are an excellent gentleman, sir: I wish [and then she sighed] I had had the happiness to know there was such a lawyer in the world; and to have been acquainted with him.

Come, come, Mrs. Moore, I think your name is, it may not be too late—when you and I are better acquainted, I may help *you* perhaps.—But mention nothing of this to the lady; for, as I said, I hate to appear officious.

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This prohibition I knew, if goody Moore answered the specimen she had given of her womanhood, would make her take the first opportunity to tell, were it to be necessary to my purpose that she should.

I appeared, upon the whole, so indifferent about seeing the room, or the lady, that the good woman was the more eager I should see both. And the rather, as I, to stimulate her, declared that there was more required in my eye to merit the character of a handsome woman, than most people thought necessary; and that I had never seen six truly lovely women in my life.

To be brief, she went in; and after a little while came out again. The lady, sir, is retired to her closet. So you may go in and look at the room.

Then how my heart began again to play its pug's tricks!

I hobbled in, and stumped about, and liked it very much; and was sure my wife would. I begged excuse for sitting down, and asked who was the minister of the place? If he were a good preacher? Who preached at the Chapel? And if *he* were a good preacher, and good *liver* too, Madam —I must inquire after *that:* for I love, I must needs say, that the clergy should practise what they preach.

Very right, sir; but that is not so often the case as were to be wished.

More's the pity, Madam. But I have a great veneration for the clergy in general. It is more a satire upon human nature than upon the cloth, if we suppose those who have the *best* opportunities to do good, less perfect than other people. For my part, I don't love *professional* any more than *national* reflections.—But I keep the lady in her closet. My gout makes me rude.

Then up from my seat stumped I—what do you call these window-curtains, Madam?

Stuff damask, sir.

It looks mighty well, truly. I like it better than silk. It is warmer to be sure, and much fitter for lodgings in the country; especially for people in years. The bed is in a pretty taste.

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It is neat and clean, sir: that's all we pretend to.

Ay, mighty well—very well—a silk camblet, I think—very well, truly!—I am sure my wife will like it. But we would not turn the lady out of her lodgings for the world. The other two apartments will do for us at the present.

Then stumping towards the closet, over the door of which hung a picture—What picture is that?—Oh! I see: a St. Cecilia!

A common print, sir!

Pretty well, pretty well! It is after an Italian master.—I would not for the world turn the lady out of her apartment. We can make shift with the other two, repeated I, louder still: but yet mumblingly hoarse: for I had as great a regard to uniformity in accent, as to my words.

O Belford! to be so near my angel, think what a painful constraint I was under.

I was resolved to fetch her out, if possible: and pretending to be going—you can't agree as to any *time*, Mrs. Moore, when we can have this third room, can you?—Not that [whispered I, loud enough to be heard in the next room; not that] I would incommode the lady: but I would tell my wife *when* abouts—and women, you know, Mrs. Moore, love to have everything before them of this nature.

Mrs. Moore (said my charmer) [and never did her voice sound so harmonious to me. Oh! how my heart bounded again! It even talked to me, in a manner; for I thought I *heard*, as well as felt, its unruly flutters; and every vein about me seemed a pulse; Mrs. Moore], you may acquaint the gentleman that I shall stay here only for two or three days at most, till I receive an answer to a letter I have written into the country; and rather than be your hindrance, I will take up with any apartment a pair of stairs higher.

Not for the world!—Not for the world, young lady! cried I.—My wife, well as I love her, should lie in a garret, rather than put such a considerate young lady, as you seem to be, to the least inconveniency.

She opened not the door yet; and I said, but since you have so much goodness, Madam, if I could but just look into

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the closet as I stand, I could tell my wife whether it is large enough to hold a cabinet she much values, and will have with her wherever she goes.

Then my charmer opened the door, and blazed upon me, as it were, in a flood of light, like what one might imagine would strike a man, who, born blind, had by some propitious power been blessed with his sight, all at once, in a meridian sun.

Upon my soul, I never was so strangely affected before. I had much ado to forbear discovering myself that instant: but, hesitatingly, and in great disorder, I said, looking into the closet and around it, there is room, I see, for my wife's cabinet; and it has many jewels in it of high price; but, upon my soul [for I could not forbear swearing, like a puppy: habit is a cursed thing, Jack—], nothing so valuable as a lady I see, can be brought into it.

She started, and looked at me with terror. The truth of the compliment, as far as I know, had taken dissimulation from my accent.

I saw it was impossible to conceal myself longer from her, any more than (from the violent impulses of my passion) to forbear manifesting myself. I unbuttoned therefore my cape, I pulled off my flapped, slouched hat; I threw open my great-coat, and, like the devil in Milton [an odd comparison, though!]

> I started up in my own form divine,
> Touched by the beam of her celestial eye,
> More potent than Ithuriel's spear!—

Now, Belford, for a similitude—now for a likeness to illustrate the surprising scene, and the effect it had upon my charmer, and the gentlewoman!—But nothing *was* like it, or equal to it. The plain fact can only describe it, and set it off—thus then take it.

She no sooner saw who it was, than she gave three violent screams; and before I could catch her in my arms (as I was about to do the moment I discovered myself), down she sunk at my feet in a fit; which made me curse my indiscretion for so suddenly, and with so much emotion, revealing myself.

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The gentlewoman, seeing so strange an alteration in my person, and features, and voice, and dress, cried out, Murder, help! murder, help! by turns, for half a dozen times running. This alarmed the house, and up ran two servant maids, and *my* servant after them. I cried out for water and hartshorn, and every one flew a different way, one of the maids as fast down as she came up; while the gentlewoman ran out of one room into another, and by turns up and down the apartment we were in, without meaning or end, wringing her foolish hands, and not knowing what she did.

Up then came running a gentleman and his sister, fetched, and brought in by the maid, who had run down, and having let in a cursed, crabbed old wretch, hobbling with his gout, and mumbling with his hoarse broken-toothed voice, who was metamorphosed all at once into a lively, gay young fellow, with a clear accent, and all his teeth, she would have it that I was neither more nor less than the devil, and could not keep her eye from my foot, expecting, no doubt, every minute to see it discover itself to be cloven.

For my part, I was so intent upon restoring my angel, that I regarded nobody else. And at last, she slowly recovering motion, with bitter sighs and sobs (only the whites of her eyes however appearing for some moments), I called upon her in the tenderest accent, as I kneeled by her, my arm supporting her head, My angel! my charmer! my Clarissa! look upon me, my dearest life!—I am not angry with you; I will forgive you, my best beloved.

The gentleman and his sister knew not what to make of all this: and the less, when my fair one, recovering her sight, snatched another look at me; and then again groaned, and fainted away.

I threw up the closet-sash for air, and then left her to the care of the young gentlewoman, the same notable Miss Rawlins, who I had heard of at the Flask: and to that of Mrs. Moore; who by this time had recovered herself; and then retiring to one corner of the room, I made my servant pull off my gouty stockings, brush my hat, and loop it up into the usual smart cock.

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I then stepped to the closet to Mr. Rawlins, whom, in the general confusion, I had not much minded before.—Sir, said I, you have an uncommon scene before you. The lady is my wife, and no gentleman's presence is necessary here but my own.

I beg pardon, sir; *if* the lady be your wife, I have no business here. *But*, sir, by her concern at seeing you——

Pray, sir, none of your *ifs* and *buts*, I beseech you: nor *your* concern about the *lady's* concern. You are a very unqualified judge in this cause; and I beg of you, sir, to oblige me with your absence. The women only are proper to be present on this occasion, added I; and I think myself obliged to them for their care and kind assistance.

'Tis well he made not another word: for I found my choler begin to rise. I could not bear that the finest neck, and arms, and foot, in the world, should be exposed to the eyes of any man living but mine.

I withdrew once more from the closet, finding her beginning to recover, lest the sight of me too soon should throw her back again.

The first words she said, looking round her with great emotion, were, Oh! hide me, hide me! Is he gone?—Oh! hide me!—Is he gone?

Sir, said Miss Rawlins, coming to me with an air both peremptory and assured, This is some surprising case. The lady cannot bear the sight of you. What you have done is best known to yourself. But another such fit will probably be her last. It would be but kind therefore for you to retire.

It behoved me to have so notable a person of my party; and the rather as I had disobliged her impertinent brother.

The dear creature, said I, may *well* be concerned to see me. If *you*, Madam, had a husband who loved you as I love her, you would not, I am confident, fly from him, and expose yourself to hazards, as she does whenever she has not all her way —and yet with a mind not capable of intentional evil—but mother-spoilt!—This is her fault, and all her fault: and the more inexcusable it is, as I am the man of her choice, and have reason to think she loves me above all the men in the world.

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Here, Jack, was a story to support to the lady; face to face too!*

You *speak* like a gentleman; you *look* like a gentleman, said Miss Rawlins—but, sir, this is a strange case; the lady seems to dread the sight of you.

No wonder, Madam; taking her a little on one side, nearer to Mrs. Moore. I have three times already forgiven the dear creature—but this is *jealousy!*—There is a spice of *that* in it—and of *phrensy* too [whispered I, that it might have the face of a secret, and of consequence the more engage their attention]—but our story is too long——

* And here, Belford, lest thou, through inattention, should be surprised at my assurance, let me remind thee (and that thus, by way of marginal observation, that I may not break in upon my narrative) that this my intrepidity was but a consequence of the measures I had previously concerted (as I have from time to time acquainted thee) in apprehension of such an event as has fallen out. For had not the dear creature already passed for my wife, before no less than four worthy gentlemen of family and fortune?* and before Mrs. Sinclair, and her household, and Miss Partington? And had she not agreed to her uncle's expedient, that she *should* pass for such, from the time of Mr. Hickman's application to that uncle;† and that the worthy Captain Tomlinson should be allowed to propagate that belief; as he had actually reported to two families (*they possibly to more*); purposely that it might come to the ears of James Harlowe; and serve for a foundation for uncle John to build his reconciliation-scheme upon?‡ And canst thou think that nothing was meant by all this contrivance? and that I am not still *further* prepared to support my story?

Indeed, I little thought at the time that I formed these precautionary schemes, that she would ever have been able, if *willing*, to get out of my hands. All that I hoped I should have occasion to have recourse to them for, was only in case I should have the courage to make the grand attempt, and should succeed in it, to bring the dear creature [*and this out of tenderness to her*, for what attention did I ever yet pay to the grief, the execrations, the tears of a woman I had triumphed over?] to bear me in her sight; to expostulate with me, to be pacified by my pleas, and by my own future hopes, founded upon the reconciliatory-project, upon my reiterated vows, and upon the Captain's assurances. Since in that case, to forgive me, to have gone on with me, *for a week*, would have been to forgive me, to have gone on with me, *for ever*. And that, had my eligible life of honour taken place, her trials would all have been then over; and she would have known nothing but gratitude, love, and joy, to the end of one of our lives. For never would I, never could I, have abandoned such an admirable creature as this. Thou knowest I never was a sordid villain to any of her inferiors—her *inferiors*, I may say—for who is not her inferior?

* See vol. ii. Letter LXXXI. towards the conclusion.
† See vol. ii. Letter XCIII. ‡ Ibid.

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I then made a motion to go to my beloved. But they desired that I would walk into the next room; and they would endeavour to prevail upon her to lie down.

I begged that they would not suffer her to talk; for that she was accustomed to fits, and when in this way, would talk of anything that came uppermost: and the more she was suffered to run on, the worse she was; and if not kept quiet, would fall into ravings: which might possibly hold her a week.

They promised to keep her quiet; and I withdrew into the next room: ordering every one down but Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins.

She was full of exclamations. Unhappy creature! miserable! ruined! and undone! she called herself; wrung her hands, and begged they would assist her to escape from the terrible evils she should otherwise be made to suffer.

They preached patience and quietness to her; and would have had her to lie down: but she refused; sinking, however, into an easy chair; for she trembled so she could not stand.

By this time, I hoped that she was enough recovered to bear a presence that it behoved me to make her bear; and fearing she would throw out something in her exclamations, that would still more disconcert me, I went into the room again.

Oh, there he is! said she, and threw her apron over her face—I cannot see him!—I cannot look upon him!—Begone, begone! touch me not!—

For I took her struggling hand, beseeching her to be pacified; and assuring her that I would make all up with her upon her own terms and wishes.

Base man! said the violent lady, I have no wishes, but never to behold you more! Why must I be thus pursued and haunted? Have you not made me miserable enough already?—Despoiled of all succour and help, and of every friend, I am contented to be poor, low, and miserable, so I may be free from your persecutions.

Miss Rawlins stared at me [a confident slut this Miss Rawlins, thought I]: so did Mrs. Moore. I told you so!

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whispering said I, turning to the women; shaking my head with a face of great concern and pity; and then to my charmer, My dear creature, how you rave! You will not easily recover from the effects of this violence. Have patience, my love. Be pacified; and we will coolly talk this matter over: for you expose yourself, as well as me: these ladies will certainly think you have fallen among robbers, and that I am the chief of them.

So you are! so you are! stamping, her face still covered [*she thought of Wednesday night, no doubt*]; and sighing as if her heart were breaking, she put her hand to her forehead —I shall be quite distracted!

I will not, my dearest love, uncover your face. You shall *not* look upon me, since I am so odious to you. But this is a violence I never thought you capable of.

And I would have pressed her hand as I held it, with my lips; but she drew it from me with indignation.

Unhand me, sir, said she. I will not be touched by you. Leave me to my fate. What right, what title, have you to persecute me thus?

What right, what title, my dear!—But this is not a time —I have a letter from Captain Tomlinson—here it is— offering it to her——

I will receive nothing from your hands—tell me not of Captain Tomlinson—tell me not of anybody—you have no *right* to invade me thus—once more leave me to my fate— have you not made me miserable enough?

I touched a delicate string, on purpose to set her in such a passion before the women, as might confirm the intimation I had given of a phrensical disorder.

What a turn is here!—Lately so happy—nothing wanting but a reconciliation between you and your friends!—That reconciliation in such a happy train—shall so *slight,* so *accidental* an occasion be suffered to overturn all our happiness?

She started up with a trembling impatience, her apron falling from her indignant face—now, said she, that thou *darest* to call the occasion *slight* and *accidental,* and that

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I am happily out of thy vile hands, and out of a house I have reason to believe *as* vile, traitor and wretch that thou art, I will venture to cast an eye upon thee—and oh! that it were in my power, in mercy to my sex, to look thee first into shame and remorse, and then into death!

This violent tragedy speech, and the high manner in which she uttered it, had its desired effect. I looked upon the women, and upon her by turns, with a pitying eye; and they shook their wise heads, and besought *me* to retire, and *her* to lie down to compose herself.

This hurricane, like other hurricanes, was presently allayed by a shower. She threw herself once more into her armed chair, and begged pardon of the women for her passionate excess; but not of me: yet I was in hopes, that when compliments were stirring, I should have come in for a share.

Indeed, ladies, said I [with assurance enough, thou'lt say], this violence is not natural to my beloved's temper—misapprehension——

Misapprehension, wretch!—And want I excuses from thee!

By what a scorn was every lovely feature agitated!

Then turning her face from me, I have not patience, oh, thou guileful betrayer, to look upon thee! Begone! Begone! With a face so unblushing, how darest thou appear in my presence?

I thought then, that the character of a husband obliged me to be angry.

You may one day, Madam, repent this treatment:—by my soul, you may. You know I have not deserved it of you—you *know*—I have not.

Do I know you have not?—Wretch! Do I know——

You do, Madam—and never did man of my figure and consideration [I thought it was proper to throw that in] meet with such treatment——

She lifted up her hands: indignation kept her silent.

But all is of a piece with the charge you bring against me of *despoiling you of all succour and help*, of making you *poor* and *low*, and with other unprecedented language. I will only say, before these two gentlewomen, that since it

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must be so, and since your former esteem for me is turned into so riveted an aversion, I will soon, *very* soon, make you entirely easy. I *will* be gone:—I *will* leave you to *your own fate,* as you call it; and may that be happy!—Only, that I may not appear to be a spoiler, a robber indeed, let me know whither I shall send your apparel, and everything that belongs to you, and I will send it.

Send it to this place; and assure me that you will never molest me more; never more come near me; and that is all I ask of you.

I *will* do so, Madam, said I, with a dejected air. But did I ever think I should be so indifferent to you?—However, you must permit me to insist on your reading this letter; and on your seeing Captain Tomlinson, and hearing what he has to say from your uncle. He will be here by and by.

Don't trifle with me, said she in an imperious tone—do as you offer. I will not receive any letter from your hands. If I see Captain Tomlinson, it shall be on his *own* account, not on *yours.* You tell me you will send me my apparel—if you would have me believe anything you say, let this be the test of your sincerity.—Leave me *now,* and send my things.

The women stared.—They did nothing but stare; and appeared to be more and more at a loss what to make of the matter between us.

I pretended to be going from her in a pet; but when I had got to the door, I turned back; and as if I had recollected myself—One word more, my dearest creature!—Charming, even in your anger!—Oh, my fond soul! said I, turning half round, and pulling out my handkerchief.

I believe, Jack, my eyes did glisten a little. I have no doubt but they did. The women pitied me—honest souls! They showed they had each of them a handkerchief as well as I. So, hast thou not observed (to give a familiar illustration) every man in a company of a dozen or more, obligingly pull out his watch, when some one has asked what's o'clock?—As each man of a like number, if one talks of his beard, will fall to stroking his chin with his four fingers and thumb.

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One word only, Madam, repeated I (as soon as my voice had recovered its tone), I have represented to Captain Tomlinson in the most favourable light the cause of our present misunderstanding. You know what your uncle insists upon, and with which you have acquiesced.—The letter in my hand [and again I offered it to her] will acquaint you with what you have to apprehend from your brother's active malice.

She was going to speak in a high accent, putting the letter from her, with an open palm—Nay, hear me out, Madam—The Captain, you know, has reported our *marriage* to two different persons. It is come to your brother's ears. My own relations have also heard of it.—Letters were brought me from town this morning, from Lady Betty Lawrance, and Miss Montague. Here they are. [I pulled them out of my pocket, and offered them to her, with that of the Captain; but she held back her still open palm, that she might not receive them.] Reflect, Madam, I beseech you, reflect upon the fatal consequences with which this, your high resentment, may be attended.

Ever since I knew you, said she, I have been in a wilderness of doubt and error. I bless God that I am out of your hands. I will transact for myself what relates to myself. I dismiss all your solicitude for me.—Am I not my own mistress?—Have you any title?——

The women stared—[the devil stare ye, thought I!—Can ye do nothing but stare?]—It was high time to stop her here.

I raised my voice to drown hers.—You used, my dearest creature, to have a tender and apprehensive heart.—You never had so much reason for such a one as now.

Let me judge for myself, upon what I shall *see*, not upon what I shall *hear*.—Do you think I shall ever?——

I dreaded her going on—I *must* be heard, Madam (raising my voice still higher),—you *must* let me read one paragraph or two out of this letter to you, if you will not read it yourself——

Begone from me, man!—Begone from me with thy letters! What pretence hast thou for tormenting me thus? What right?—What title?——

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Dearest creature! what questions you ask!—Questions that you can as well answer yourself——

I *can*, I *will*, and *thus* I answer them——

Still louder raised I my voice.—She was overborne.—Sweet soul! It would be hard, thought I [and yet I was very angry with her], if such a spirit as thine cannot be brought to yield to such a one as mine!

I lowered my voice on her silence. All gentle, all *entreative*, my accent. My head bowed—one hand held out—the other on my honest heart.—For heaven's sake, my dearest creature, resolve to see Captain Tomlinson with temper. He would have come along with me, but I was willing to try to soften your mind first on this fatal misapprehension, and this for the sake of your own wishes. For what is it otherwise to me, whether your friends are, or are not, reconciled to us?—*Do I want any favour from them?*—For your own mind's sake, therefore, frustrate not Captain Tomlinson's negotiation. That worthy gentleman will be here in the afternoon; Lady Betty will be in town, with my cousin Montague, in a day or two.—They will be your visitors. I beseech you do not carry this misunderstanding so far, as that Lord M. and Lady Betty and Lady Sarah may know it. [*How considerable this made me look to the women!*] Lady Betty will not let you rest till you consent to accompany her to her own seat—and to that lady may you safely intrust your cause.

Again, upon my pausing a moment, she was going to break out. I liked not the turn of her countenance, nor the tone of her voice—"And thinkest thou, base wretch," were the words she *did* utter: I again raised my voice, and drowned hers.—*Base wretch*, Madam?—You know that I have not deserved the violent names you have called me. Words so opprobrious from a mind so gentle!—But this treatment is from *you*, Madam!—From *you*, whom I love more than my own soul!—By that soul, I swear that I do.—[The women looked upon each other—they seemed pleased with my ardour.—Women, whether wives, maids, or widows, love ardours: even Miss Howe, thou knowest,

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speaks up for ardours,*]—Nevertheless, I must say that you have carried matters too far for the occasion. I see you hate me——

She was just going to speak—If we are to *separate for ever*, in a strong and solemn voice, proceeded I, this island shall not long be troubled with me. Meantime, only be pleased to give these letters a perusal, and consider what is to be said to your uncle's friend, and what he is to say to your uncle.—Anything will I come into (renounce me, if you will), that shall make for *your* peace, and for the reconciliation *your heart was so lately set upon.* But I humbly conceive that it is necessary that you should come into better temper with me, were it but to give a favourable appearance to what *has passed*, and weight to any *future application* to your friends, in whatever way you shall think proper to make it.

I then put the letters into her lap, and retired into the next apartment with a low bow and a very solemn air.

I was soon followed by the two women. Mrs. Moore withdrew to give the fair perverse time to read them: Miss Rawlins for the same reason, and because she was sent for home.

The widow besought her speedy return. I joined in the same request; and she was ready enough to promise to oblige us.

I excused myself to Mrs. Moore for the disguise I had appeared in at first, and for the story I had invented. I told her that I held myself obliged to satisfy her for the whole floor we were upon; and for an upper room for my servant, and that for a month certain.

She made many scruples, and begged she might not be urged, on this head, till she had consulted Miss Rawlins.

I consented; but told her that she had taken my earnest, and I hoped there was no room for dispute.

Just then Miss Rawlins returned, with an air of eager curiosity; and having been told what had passed between Mrs. Moore and me, she gave herself airs of office immedi-

* See Letters IX. and XIV. of this volume.

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ately: which I humoured, plainly perceiving that if I had *her* with me I had the other.

She wished, if there were time for it, and if it were not quite impertinent in her to desire it, that I would give Mrs. Moore and her a brief history of an affair, which, as she said, bore the face of novelty, mystery, and surprise. For sometimes it looked to her as if we were married; at other times that point appeared doubtful; and yet the lady did not absolutely deny it, but upon the whole, thought herself highly injured.

I said that ours was a very particular case.—That, were I to acquaint them with it, some part of it would hardly appear credible. But, however, as they seemed to be persons of discretion, I would give them a brief account of the whole; and this in so plain and sincere a manner, that it should clear up, to their satisfaction, everything that had passed, or might hereafter pass between us.

They sat down by me and threw every feature of their faces into attention. I was resolved to go as near the truth as possible, lest anything should drop from my spouse to impeach my veracity; and yet keep in view what passed at the Flask.

It is necessary, although thou knowest my whole story, and a good deal of my views, that thou shouldst be apprised of the substance of what I told them.

'I gave them, in as concise a manner as I was able, the 'history of our families, fortunes, alliances, antipathies, her 'brother's and mine particularly. I averred the truth of 'our private marriage.' The Captain's letter, which I will enclose, will give thee my reasons for that. And, besides, the women might have proposed a parson to me by way of compromise. 'I told them the condition my spouse had 'made me swear to; and to which she held me, in order, I 'said, to induce me the sooner to be reconciled to her re-'lations.

'I owned that this restraint made me sometimes ready 'to fly out.' And Mrs. Moore was so good as to declare, that *she did not much wonder at it.*

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Thou art a very good sort of woman, Mrs. Moore, thought I.

As Miss Howe has actually detected our mother, and might possibly find some way still to acquaint her friend with her discoveries, I thought it proper to prepossess them in favour of Mrs. Sinclair and her two nieces.

I said, 'they were gentlewomen born; that they had not 'bad hearts; that indeed my spouse did not love them; they 'having once taken the liberty to blame her for her over-'niceness with regard to me. People, I said, even *good* 'people, who knew themselves to be guilty of a fault they 'had no inclination to mend, were too often least patient 'when told of it; as they could less bear than others to be 'thought indifferently of.'

Too often the case, they owned.

'Mrs. Sinclair's house was a very handsome house, and 'fit to receive the first quality [true enough, Jack!]; Mrs. 'Sinclair was a woman very easy in her circumstances:— 'A widow gentlewoman, as *you*, Mrs. Moore, are.—Lets 'lodgings as *you*, Mrs. Moore, do.—Once had better pros-'pects as *you*, Mrs. Moore, may have had: the relict of 'Colonel Sinclair;—you, Mrs. Moore, might know Colonel 'Sinclair—he had lodgings at Hampstead.'

She had heard of the name.

'Oh! he was related to the best families in Scotland!— 'And his widow is not to be reflected upon because she lets 'lodgings, you know, Mrs. Moore—you know, Miss Rawlins.'

Very true, and very true.—And they must needs say, it did not look quite so pretty, in such a lady as my spouse, to be so censorious.

A foundation here, thought I, to procure these women's help to get back the fugitive, or their connivance, at least, at my doing so; as well as for anticipating any future information from Miss Howe.

I gave them a character of that virago; and intimated, 'that for a head to contrive mischief, and a heart to execute 'it, she had hardly her equal in her sex.'

To *this* Miss Howe it was, Mrs. Moore said, she supposed,

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that my spouse was so desirous to despatch a man and horse, by day-dawn, with a letter she wrote before she went to bed last night, proposing to stay no longer than till she had received an answer to it.

The very same, said I; I *knew* she would have immediate recourse to her. I should have been but too happy, could I have prevented such a letter from passing, or so to have managed as to have it given into Mrs. Howe's hands, instead of her daughter's. Women who had lived some time in the world knew *better* than to encourage such skittish pranks in young wives.

Let me just stop to tell thee, while it is in my head, that I have since given Will. his cue to find out where the man lives who is gone with the fair fugitive's letter; and, if possible, to see him on his return, before he sees her.

I told the women, 'I despaired that it would ever be better 'with us while Miss Howe had so strange an ascendancy 'over my spouse, and remained herself *unmarried*. And 'until the reconciliation with her friends could be effected; 'or a *still* happier event—as I should think it, who am the 'last male of my family; and which my foolish vow, and 'her rigour, had hitherto'——

Here I stopt, and looked modest, turning my diamond ring round my finger; while goody Moore looked mighty significant, calling it a very particular case; and the maiden fanned away, and primmed, and pursed, to show that what I had said needed no further explanation.

'I told them the occasion of our present difference. I 'avowed the reality of the fire; but owned that I would 'have made no scruple of breaking the unnatural oath she 'had bound me in (having a husband's right on my side), 'when she was so accidentally frighted into my arms; and 'I blamed myself excessively, that I did not; since she 'thought fit to carry her resentment so high, and had the 'injustice to suppose the fire to be a contrivance of mine.'

Nay, for that matter, Mrs. Moore said, as we were *married*, and *madam* was so *odd*—every gentleman *would not*—and stopt there Mrs. Moore.

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'To suppose I should have recourse to such a *poor* con-
'trivance, said I, when I saw the dear creature *every hour*.'
Was not this a bold put, Jack?

A most extraordinary case, truly, cried the maiden; fanning, yet coming in with her *Well-but's!*—and her sifting *Pray, sir's!*—and her restraining *Enough, sir's!*—flying *from* the question *to* the question.—her seat now and then uneasy, for fear my *want of delicacy* should hurt her abundant *modesty;* and yet it was difficult to satisfy her *super*-abundant *curiosity*.

'My beloved's jealousy, [and jealousy of itself, to female
'minds, accounts for a thousand unaccountablenesses], and
'the imputation of her half phrensy, brought upon her by
'her father's wicked curse, and by the previous persecutions
'she had undergone from all her family, were what I dwelt
'upon, in order to provide against what might happen.'

In short, 'I owned against myself most of the offences
'which I did not doubt but she would charge me with in
'their hearing; and as every cause has a black and white
'side, I gave the worst parts of our story the gentlest turn.
'And when I had done, acquainted them with some of the
'contents of that letter of Captain Tomlinson which I had
'left with the lady. I concluded with cautioning them to
'be guarded against the inquiries of James Harlowe, and of
'Captain Singleton, or of any sailor-looking men.'

This thou wilt see, from the letter itself, was necessary to be done. Here, therefore, thou mayest read it. And a charming letter to my purpose wilt thou find it to be, if thou givest the least attention to its contents.

To Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Wednesday, June 7.

DEAR SIR,—Although I am obliged to be in town to-morrow, or next day at farthest, yet I would not dispense with writing to you, by *one of my servants* (whom I send up before me upon a particular occasion), in order to advertise you, *that it is probable you will hear from some of*

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your own relations on your [*supposed**] *nuptials.* One of the persons (Mr. Lilburne by name), to whom I hinted my belief of your marriage, happens to be acquainted with Mr. Spurrier, Lady Betty Lawrance's steward, and (not being under any restriction) mentioned it *to* Mr. Spurrier, and he to Lady Betty, as a thing certain; and this (though I have not the honour *to be personally known to her ladyship*) brought on an inquiry from her ladyship to me by her gentleman; who coming to me in company with Mr. Lilburne, I had no way but to confirm the report.—And I understand that Lady Betty takes it amiss that she was not acquainted with so desirable a piece of news from yourself.

Her ladyship, it seems, has *business that calls her to town* [and you will possibly choose to put her right. If you do, it will, I presume, *be in confidence;* that nothing may transpire from your *own* family to contradict what I have given out].

[I have ever been of opinion, *That truth ought to be strictly adhered to on all occasions:* and am concerned that I have (though with so good a view) departed from my old maxim. But my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe would have it so. Yet I never knew a departure of this kind a *single* departure. But, to make the best of it now, allow me, sir, once more to beg the lady, as soon as possible, to authenticate the report given out.] When both you and the lady join in the acknowledgment of your marriage, it will be impertinent in any one to be inquisitive as to the *day or week.* [And if as privately celebrated as you intend (while the gentlewomen with whom you lodge are properly instructed, as you say they are, and who actually believe you were married long ago), who shall be able to give a contradiction to my report?]

And yet it is very probable that minute inquiries will be made; and this is what renders precaution necessary; for Mr. James Harlowe will not believe that you are married; and is sure, he says, that you both lived together when Mr.

* What is between hooks [ ] thou mayest suppose, Jack, I sunk upon the women, in the account I gave them of the contents of this letter.

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Hickman's application was made to Mr. John Harlowe: and if you lived together *any* time unmarried, he infers from *your* character, Mr. Lovelace, that it is not probable that you would ever marry. And he leaves it to his two uncles to decide, if you even *should be married,* whether there be not room to believe that his sister was *first dishonoured;* and if so, to judge of the title she will have to their favour, or to the forgiveness of any of her family.—I believe, sir, this part of my letter had best be kept from the lady.

Young Mr. Harlowe is *resolved to find this out,* and *to come at his sister's speech likewise:* and for that purpose sets out *to-morrow,* as I am well informed, *with a large attendance armed;* and *Mr. Solmes is to be of the party.* And what makes him the more earnest to find it out is this:—Mr. John Harlowe has told the whole family that he will alter, and new-settle his will. Mr. Antony Harlowe is resolved to do the same by his; for it seems he has now given over all thoughts of changing his condition, *having lately been disappointed in a view he had of that sort with Mrs. Howe.* These two brothers generally *act in concert;* and Mr. James Harlowe dreads (and let me tell you, that he has reason for it, on *my* Mr. Harlowe's account) that his younger sister will be, at last, more benefited than he wishes for, by the alteration intended. He has already been endeavouring to sound his uncle Harlowe on this subject; and wanted to know whether any *new application* had been made to him on his sister's part. Mr. Harlowe avoided a direct answer, and expressed his wishes for a general reconciliation, and his hopes that his niece were married. This offended the furious young man, and he reminded his uncle of engagements they had all entered into at his sister's going away, *not to be reconciled but by general consent.*

Mr. John Harlowe complains to me often of the uncontrollableness of his nephew; and says that now that the young man has not anybody of whose superior sense he stands in awe, he observes not decency in his behaviour to

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any of them. And this makes *my* Mr. Harlowe still more desirous than ever of bringing his younger niece into favour again. I will not say all I might of this young man's extraordinary rapaciousness:—but one would think *that these grasping men expect to live for ever!*

'I took the liberty but within these two hours to pro-'pose to set on foot (and offered my cover to) a correspond-'ence between *my friend and his daughter-niece,* as he still 'sometimes fondly calls her. She was mistress of so much 'prudence, I said, that I was sure she could better direct 'everything to its desirable end, than anybody else could. 'But he said he did not think himself entirely at liberty 'to take such a step *at present;* and that it was best that 'he should have it in his power to say, occasionally, that 'he had not any correspondence *with* her, or letter *from* her.

'You will see, sir, from all this, the necessity of keep-'ing our treaty an *absolute secret;* and if the lady has 'mentioned it to her *worthy friend* Miss Howe, I hope 'it is in confidence.'

[And now, sir, a few lines in answer to yours of Monday last.]

[Mr. Harlowe was very well pleased with your readiness to come into his proposal. But as to what you *both* desire, that he will be present at the ceremony, he said, that his nephew watched all his steps so narrowly that he thought it was not practicable (if he were inclinable) to oblige you; but that he consented, with all his heart, that I should be the person whom he had stipulated should be privately present at the ceremony on his part.]

[However, I think, I have an *expedient* for this, if your lady *continues* to be very desirous of her uncle's presence (except he should be more determined than his answer to me seemed to import); of which I shall acquaint you and perhaps of what he says to it, *when I have the pleasure to see you in town.* But, indeed, I think you have *no time to lose.* Mr. Harlowe is impatient to hear that you are actually one; and I hope I may carry him down word, when I leave you next, that I *saw* the ceremony performed.]

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[If any obstacle arises from the lady (from *you* it cannot), I shall be tempted *to think a little hardly of her punctilio.*]

Mr. Harlowe hopes, sir, that you will rather take pains to *avoid* than to *meet* this violent young man. He has the better opinion of you, let me tell you, sir, from the account I gave him of your moderation and politeness; neither of which are qualities with his nephew. *But we have all of us something to amend.*

You cannot imagine how dearly my friend still loves this excellent niece of his.—I will give you an instance of it which affected me a good deal—'If once more, said he (the 'last time but one we were together), I can but see this 'sweet child gracing the upper end of my table, as mistress 'of my house, in my *allotted month;* all the rest of my 'family present but as her guests; for so I formerly would 'have it; and had her *mother's consent for it*—' There he stopt; for he was forced to turn his reverend face from me. Tears ran down his cheeks. Fain would he have hid them: but he could not—'Yet—yet, said he—how—how—' [poor gentleman, he perfectly sobbed], 'how shall I be able to 'bear the first meeting!'

I bless God I am *no hard-hearted man,* Mr. Lovelace: my eyes showed to my worthy friend that he had no reason to be ashamed of his humanity before me.

I will put an end to this long epistle. Be pleased to make my compliments acceptable to the most excellent of women; as well as believe me to me,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend, and humble servant,

ANTONY TOMLINSON.

DURING the conversation between me and the women, I had planted myself at the farther end of the apartment we were in, over against the door, which was open; and opposite to the lady's chamber-door, which was shut. I spoke so low that it was impossible for her, at that distance, to hear what we said; and in this situation I could see if her door opened.

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I told the women that what I had mentioned to my spouse of Lady Betty's coming to town with her niece Montague, and of their intention to visit my beloved, whom they had never seen, nor she them, was real; and that I expected news of their arrival every hour. I then showed them copies of the other two letters, which I had left with *her;* the one from Lady Betty, the other from my cousin Montague.—And here thou mayest read them if thou wilt.

Eternally reproaching, eternally upbraiding me, are my impertinent relations. But they are fond of occasions to find fault with me. Their love, their love, Jack, and their dependence on my known good humour, are their inducements.

To Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Wednesday Morning, June 7.

DEAR NEPHEW,—I understand that at length all our wishes are answered in your happy marriage. But I think we might as well have heard of it directly from you, as from the roundabout way by which we have been made acquainted with it. Methinks, sir, the *power* and the will we have to oblige you, should not expose us the more to your slights and negligence. My brother had set his heart upon giving to you the wife we have all so long wished you to have. But if you were actually married at the time you made him that request (*supposing, perhaps, that his gout would not let him attend you*) it is but like *you.**—If your lady had *her* reasons to wish it to be private while the differences between her family and self continue, you might nevertheless have communicated it to us with *that* restriction; and we should have forborne the public manifestations of our joy upon an event we have so long desired.

The distant way we have come to know it is by my steward; who is acquainted with a friend of Captain Tomlinson, to whom that gentleman revealed it; and he, it seems, had it from yourself and lady, with such circumstances as leave it not to be doubted.

* I gave Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins room to think this reproach *just*, Jack.

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I am, indeed, very much disobliged with you: so is Lady Sarah. But I shall have a very speedy opportunity to tell you so in person; being obliged to go to town to my old chancery affair. My cousin Leeson, who is, it seems, removed to Albemarle Street, has notice of it. I shall be at *her* house, where I bespeak your attendance on Sunday night. I have written to my cousin Charlotte for either her, or her sister, to meet me at Reading, and accompany me to town. I shall stay but a few days; my business being matter of form only. On my return I shall pop upon Lord M. at M. Hall, to see in what way his last fit has left him.

Meantime, having told you my mind on your negligence, I cannot help congratulating you both on the occasion.—Your fair lady particularly, upon her entrance into a family which is prepared to admire and love her.

My principal intention of writing to you (dispensing with the necessary punctilio) is, that you may acquaint my dear new niece, that I will not be denied the honour of her company down with me into Oxfordshire. I understand that your proposed house and equipages cannot be soon ready. She shall be with me till they are. I insist upon it. This shall make all up. My house shall be her own. My servants and equipages hers.

Lady Sarah, who has not been out of her own house for months, will oblige me with her company for a week, in honour of a niece so dearly beloved, as I am sure she will be of us all.

Being but in lodgings in town, neither you nor your lady can require much preparation.

Some time on Monday I hope to attend the dear young lady, to make her my compliments; and to receive *her* apology for *your* negligence: which, and her going down with me, as I said before, shall be full satisfaction. Meantime, God bless *her* for her courage (tell her I say so); and bless you *both* in each other; and that will be happiness to us all—particularly to

Your truly affectionate aunt,

ELIZ. LAWRANCE.

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To Robert Lovelace, Esq.

DEAR COUSIN,—At last, as we understand, there is some hope of you. Now does my good Lord run over his bead-roll of proverbs; of *black oxen, wild oats, long lanes,* and so forth.

Now, cousin, say I, is your time come; and you will be no longer, I hope, an infidel either to the power or excellence of the sex you have pretended hitherto so much to undervalue; nor a ridiculer or scoffer at an institution which all sober people reverence, and all rakes, sooner or later, are brought to reverence, or to wish they had.

I want to see how you become your silken fetters: whether the charming yoke sits light upon your shoulders. If with such a sweet yoke-fellow it does not, my Lord, and my sister, as well as I, think that you will deserve a closer tie about your neck.

His lordship is very much displeased that you have not written him word of the day, the hour, the manner, and everything. But I ask him, how he can *already* expect any mark of deference or politeness from you? He must stay, I tell him, till that sign of reformation, among others, appear from the influence and example of your lady: but that, if ever you will be good for anything, it will be quickly seen. And, oh, cousin, what a vast, vast journey have you to take from the dreary land of libertinism, through the bright province of reformation, into the serene kingdom of happiness! —You had need to lose no time. You have many a weary step to tread, before you can overtake those travellers who set out for it from a less remote quarter. But you have a charming pole-star to guide you; that's your advantage. I wish you joy of it: and as I have never yet expected any highly complaisant thing from you, *I make no scruple to begin first;* but it is purely, I must tell you, in respect to my new cousin; whose accession into our family we most heartily congratulate and rejoice in.

I have a letter from Lady Betty. She commands either my attendance or my sister's at Reading, to proceed with

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her to town, to cousin Leeson's. She puts Lord M. in hopes that she shall certainly bring down with her our lovely new relation; for she says she will not be denied. His lordship is the willinger to let *me* be the person, as I am in a manner wild to see her; my sister having two years ago had that honour at Sir Robert Biddulph's. So get ready to accompany us in our return; except your lady has objections strong enough to satisfy us all. Lady Sarah longs to see her; and says this accession to the family will supply to it the loss of her beloved daughter.

I shall soon, I hope, pay my compliments to the dear lady in person: so have nothing to add, but that I am

Your old mad playfellow and cousin,

CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE.

THE women having read the copies of these two letters, I thought that I might then threaten and swagger—'But 'very little heart have I, said I, to encourage such a visit 'from Lady Betty and Miss Montague to my spouse. For 'after all, I am tired out with her strange ways. She is not 'what she was, and (as I told her in your hearing, ladies) I 'will leave this plaguy island, though the place of my birth, 'and though the stake I have in it is very considerable, and 'go and reside in France or Italy, and never think of myself 'as a married man, *nor live like one.*'

Oh dear! said one.

That would be a sad thing! said the other.

Nay, Madam [turning to Mrs. Moore],—Indeed, Madam [to Miss Rawlins],—I am quite desperate. I can no longer bear such usage. I have had the good fortune to be favoured by the smiles of very fine ladies, though I say it [and I looked modest] both abroad and at home.—[*Thou knowest this to be true, Jack.*] With regard to my spouse here, I had but one hope left (for as to the reconciliation with her friends, I scorn them all too much to value that, but for her sake), and that was, that if it pleased God to bless us with children, she might entirely recover her usual serenity; and we might then be happy. But the reconciliation her heart was so

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much set upon, is now, as I hinted before, entirely hopeless—made so by this rash step of hers, and by the rasher temper she is in; since (as you will believe) her brother and sister, when they come to know it, will make a fine handle of it against us both;—affecting, as they do at present, to disbelieve our marriage—and the dear creature herself too ready to countenance such a disbelief—as nothing *more than the ceremony—as nothing more—hem!—as nothing more than the ceremony*——

Here, as thou wilt perceive, I was bashful; for Miss Rawlins, by her preparatory primness, put me in mind that it was *proper to be so*——

I turned half round; then facing the fan-player, and the matron—you *yourselves*, ladies, knew not what to believe till *now* that I have told you our story: and I do assure you that I shall not give myself the same trouble to convince people I hate; people from whom I neither expect nor desire any favour; and who are determined *not* to be convinced. And what, pray, must be the issue, when her uncle's friend comes, although he seems to be a *truly worthy man?* Is it not natural for him to say, 'To what purpose, Mr. Lovelace, 'should I endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between 'Mrs. Lovelace and her friends, by means of her elder uncle, 'when a good understanding is wanting between yourselves?' —A fair inference, Mrs. Moore!—A fair inference, Miss Rawlins.—And here is the unhappiness—till she is reconciled to them, this cursed oath, in her notion, is binding.

The women seemed moved; for I spoke with great earnestness, though low—and besides, they love to have their sex, and its favours, appear of importance to us. They shook their deep heads at each other, and looked sorrowful: and this moved my tender heart too.

'Tis an unheard-of case, ladies—had she not preferred me to all mankind—There I stopped—and that, resumed I, feeling for my handkerchief, is what staggered Captain Tomlinson when he heard of her flight; who, the last time he saw us together, saw the most affectionate couple on earth! —the most affectionate couple on earth!—in the accent grievous, repeated I.

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Out then I pulled my handkerchief, and putting it to my eyes, arose, and walked to the window—It makes me weaker than a woman, did I not love her as never man loved *his wife!* [I have no doubt but I do, Jack.]

There again I stopt; and resuming—Charming creature as you see she is, I wish I had never beheld her face!—Excuse me, ladies; traversing the room, and having rubbed my eyes till I supposed them red, I turned to the women; and pulling out my letter-case, I will show you one letter—here it is—read it, Miss Rawlins, if you please—it will confirm to you how much all my family are prepared to admire her. I am freely treated in it;—so I am in the two others: but after what I have told you, nothing need be a secret to you two.

She took it with an air of eager curiosity, and looked at the seal, ostentatiously coroneted; and at the superscription, reading out, *To Robert Lovelace, Esq.*—Ay, Madam—Ay, Miss, that's my name [giving myself an air, though I had told it to them before], I am not ashamed of it. My wife's maiden name—*unmarried* name, I should rather say—fool that I am!—and I rubbed my cheek for vexation [Fool enough in conscience, Jack!] was Harlowe—Clarissa Harlowe—you heard me call her *my Clarissa*——

I did—but thought it to be a feigned or love name, said Miss Rawlins.

I wonder what is Miss Rawlins's love name, Jack. Most of the fair romancers have in their early womanhood chosen love names. No parson ever gave more *real* names, than I have given *fictitious* ones. And to very good purpose: many a sweet dear has answered me a letter for the sake of owning a name which her godmother never gave her.

No—it was her real name, I said.

I bid her read out the whole letter. If the spelling be not exact, Miss Rawlins, said I, you will excuse it; the writer is a lord. But perhaps I may not show it to my spouse; for if those I have left with her have no effect upon her, neither will this: and I shall not care to expose my Lord M. to her scorn. Indeed I begin to be quite careless of consequences.

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Miss Rawlins, who could not but be pleased with this mark of my confidence, looked as if she pitied me.

And here thou mayest read the letter, No. III.

To Robert Lovelace, Esq.

M. HALL, *Wednesday, June 7.*

COUSIN LOVELACE,—I think you might have found time to let us know of your nuptials being actually solemnised. I might have expected this piece of civility from you. But perhaps the ceremony was performed at the very time that you asked me to be your lady's father—but I should be angry if I proceed in my guesses—and *little said is soon amended.*

But I can tell you that Lady Betty Lawrance, whatever Lady Sarah does will not so soon forgive you, as I have done. *Women resent slights longer than men.* You that know so much of the sex (I speak it not, however, to your praise) might have known *that.* But never was you before acquainted with a lady of such an amiable character. I hope there will be but one soul between you. I have before now said, that I will disinherit you, and settle all I can upon her, if you prove not a good husband to her.

May this marriage be crowned with a great many fine boys (I desire no girls) to build up again a family so ancient! The first boy shall take my surname by Act of Parliament. That is my will.

Lady Betty and niece Charlotte will be in town about business *before you know where you are.* They long to pay their compliments to your fair bride. I suppose you will hardly be at The Lawn when they get to town; because Greme informs me you have sent no orders there for your lady's accommodation.

Pritchard has all things in readiness for signing. I will take no advantage of your slights. Indeed I am too much used to them—more praise to my patience than to your complaisance, however.

One reason for Lady Betty's going up, as I may tell you *under the rose,* is to buy some suitable presents for Lady Sarah and all of us to make on this agreeable occasion.

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We would have blazed it away, could we have had timely notice, and thought it would have been agreeable to all round. The *like occasions don't happen every day.*

My most affectionate compliments and congratulations to my new niece, conclude me, for the present, in violent pain, that with all your heroicalness would make you mad,

Your truly affectionate uncle,

M.

THAT letter clenched the nail. Not but that, Miss Rawlins said, she saw I had been a wild gentleman; and, truly, she thought so the moment she beheld me.

They began to intercede for my spouse (so nicely had I turned the tables); and that I would not go abroad and disappoint a reconciliation so much wished for on one side, and such desirable prospects on the other in my own family.

Who knows, thought I to myself, but more may come of this plot, than I had even promised myself? What a happy man shall I be, if these women can be brought to join to carry my marriage into consummation!

Ladies, you are exceedingly good to us both. I should have some hopes, if my unhappily nice spouse could be brought to dispense with the unnatural oath she has laid me under. You see what my case is. Do you think I may not insist upon her absolving me from this abominable oath? Will you be so good as to give your advice, that one apartment may serve for a man and his wife at the hour of retirement?—[Modestly put, Belford!—And let me here observe, that few rakes would find a language so decent as to engage modest women to talk with him in, upon such subjects.]

They both simpered, and looked upon one another.

These subjects always make women simper, at least. No *need* but of the most delicate hints to *them.* A man who is gross in a woman's company, ought to be knocked down with a club: for, like so many musical instruments, touch but a single wire, and the dear souls are sensible all over.

To be sure, Miss Rawlins learnedly said, playing with her

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fan, a casuist would give it, that the matrimonial vow ought to supersede any other obligation.

Mrs. Moore, for her part, was of opinion that if the lady owned herself to be a wife, she ought to behave *like* one.

Whatever be my luck, thought I, with this *all-eyed* fair one, any other woman in the world, from fifteen to five-and-twenty, would be mine upon my own terms before the morning.

And now that I may be at hand to take all advantages, I will endeavour, said I to myself, to make sure of good quarters.

I am your lodger, Mrs. Moore, in virtue of the earnest I have given you for these apartments, and for any one you can spare above for my servants. Indeed for *all* you have to spare—for who knows what my spouse's brother may attempt? I will pay you your own demand; and that for a month or two certain (board included), as I shall or shall not be your hindrance. Take *that* as a pledge; or in part of payment—offering her a thirty pound bank note.

She declined taking it; desiring she might consult the lady first; adding, that she doubted not my honour; and that she would not let her apartments to any other person, whom she knew not something of, while I and the lady were here.

The Lady! The Lady! from both the women's mouths continually (which still implied a doubt in their hearts): and not *Your spouse,* and *Your lady, sir.*

I never met with such women, thought I:—so thoroughly convinced but this moment, yet already doubting—I am afraid I have a couple of sceptics to deal with.

I knew no reason, I said, for my wife to object to my lodging in the same house with her here, any more than in town, at Mrs. Sinclair's. But were she to make such objection, I would not quit possession, since it was not unlikely that the same freakish disorder which brought her to Hampstead, might carry her absolutely out of my knowledge.

They both seemed embarrassed; and looked upon one another; yet with such an air, as if they thought there was reason in what I said. And I declared myself her boarder, as well as lodger; and dinner-time approaching, was not denied to be the former.

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LETTER LX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

I THOUGHT it was now high time to turn my whole mind to my beloved; who had had full leisure to weigh the contents of the letters I had left with her.

I therefore requested Mrs. Moore to step in, and desire to know whether she would be pleased to admit me to attend her in her apartment, on occasion of the letters I had left with her; or whether she would favour me with her company in the dining-room?

Mrs. Moore desired Miss Rawlins to accompany her in to the lady. They tapped at the door, and were both admitted.

I cannot but stop here for one minute to remark, though against myself, upon that security which innocence gives, that nevertheless had better have in it a greater mixture of the serpent with the dove. For here, heedless of all I could say behind her back, because she was satisfied with her own worthiness, she permitted me to go on with my own story, without interruption, to persons as great strangers to her as me; and who, as strangers to *both*, might be supposed to lean to the side most injured; and that, as I managed it, was to mine. A dear, silly soul, thought I, at the time, to depend upon the goodness of her own heart, when the heart cannot be seen into but by its actions; and she, to appearance, a runaway, an eloper, from a tender, a most indulgent husband!—To neglect to cultivate the opinion of individuals, when the whole world is governed by appearance!

Yet what can be expected of an angel under twenty?—She has a world of knowledge:—knowledge *speculative*, as I may say, but no *experience*.—How should she?—Knowledge by theory only is a vague, uncertain light: a Will o' the Wisp, which as often misleads the doubting mind, as puts it right.

There are many things in the world, could a moraliser say, that would afford inexpressible pleasure to a reflecting

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mind, were it not for the mixture they come to us with. To be graver still, I have seen parents [perhaps my own did so] who delighted in those very qualities in their children while young, the natural consequences of which (too much indulged and encouraged), made them, as they grew up, the plague of their hearts.—To bring this home to my present purpose, I must tell thee that I adore this charming creature for her vigilant prudence; but yet I would not, methinks, wish her, by virtue of that prudence, which is, however, necessary to carry her above the *devices* of all the rest of the world, to be too wise for *mine*.

My revenge, my *sworn* revenge, is, nevertheless (adore her as I will), uppermost in my heart.—Miss Howe says that my love is an *Herodian* love.* By my soul, that girl's a witch! I am half sorry to say *that I find a pleasure in playing the tyrant over what I love.* Call it an ungenerous pleasure, if thou wilt: softer hearts than mine know it. The women, to a woman, know it, and *show* it too, whenever they are trusted with power. And why should it be thought strange, that I, who love them so dearly, and study them so much, should catch the infection of them?

—o—

LETTER LXI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

I WILL now give thee the substance of the dialogue that passed between the two women and the lady. Wonder not that a perverse wife makes a listening husband. The event, however, as thou wilt find, justified the old observation, *That listeners seldom hear good of themselves.* Conscious of their own demerits, if I may guess by myself [There's ingenuousness, Jack!], and fearful of censure, they seldom find themselves disappointed. There is something of sense, after all, in these proverbs, in these phrases, in this *wisdom of nations.*

* See letter LV. of this volume.

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Mrs. Moore was to be the messenger, but Miss Rawlins began the dialogue.

Your SPOUSE, Madam—[Devil!—only to fish for a negative or affirmative declaration].

Cl. My *spouse*, Madam——

Miss R. Mr. Lovelace, Madam, avers that you are married to him; and begs admittance, or your company in the dining-room, to talk upon the subject of the letters he left with you.

Cl. He is a poor, wicked wretch. Let me beg of you, Madam, to favour me with your company as often as possible while he is hereabouts, and I remain here.

Miss. R. I shall with pleasure attend you, Madam: but, methinks, I could wish you would *see* the gentleman, and hear what he has to say on the subject of the letters.

Cl. My case is a hard, a very hard one—I am quite bewildered!—I know not what to do!—I have not a friend in the world that can or will help me! Yet had none *but* friends till I knew *that man!*

Miss R. The gentleman neither looks nor talks like a bad man.—Not a *very* bad man, as men go.

As men go! Poor Miss Rawlins, thought I; and dost thou know *how men go?*

Cl. O Madam! you know him not! He can put on the appearance of an angel of light; but has a black, a very black heart!

Poor I!—

Miss R. I could not have thought it, truly! But men are very deceitful, nowadays.

Nowadays!—A fool!—Have not her history books told her that they were always so?

Mrs. Moore, sighing. I have found it so, I am sure, to my cost!

Who knows but in her time poor goody Moore may have met with a Lovelace, or a Belford, or some such vile fellow? My little harum-scarum beauty knows not what strange histories every woman living, who has had the least independence of will, could tell her, were such to be as communicative

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as she is. But here's the thing—I have given her cause enough of offence; but not enough to make her hold her tongue.

Cl. As to the letters he has left with me, I know not what to say to *them*: but am resolved never to have anything to say to *him*.

Miss R. If, Madam, I may be allowed to say so, I think you carry matters very far.

Cl. Has he been making a bad cause a good one with you, Madam?—*That* he can do with those who know him not. Indeed I heard him talking, though not what he said, and am indifferent about it.—But what account does he give of himself?

I was pleased to hear this. To arrest, to stop her passion, thought I, in the height of its career, is a charming presage.

Then the busy Miss Rawlins fished on, to find out from her either a *confirmation* or *disavowal* of my story—Was Lord M. my uncle? Did I court her at first with the allowance of her friends, her brother excepted? Had I a rencounter with that brother? Was she so persecuted in favour of a very disagreeable man, one Solmes, as to induce her to throw herself into my protection?

None of these were denied. All the objections she *could* have made, were stifled, or kept in, by the consideration (as she mentioned) that she should stay there but a little while, and that her story was too long; but Miss Rawlins would not be thus easily answered.

Miss R. He says, Madam, that he could not prevail for marriage till he had consented, under a solemn oath, to separate beds, while your family remained unreconciled.

Cl. Oh, the wretch! What can be still in his head, to endeavour to pass these stories upon strangers?

So no direct denial, thought I.—Admirable!—All will do by and by.

Miss R. He has owned that an accidental fire had frightened you very much on Wednesday night—and that—and that—and that—an accidental fire had frightened you—very much frightened you—last Wednesday night!

Then, after a short pause—In short, he owned that he

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had taken some innocent liberties, which might have led to a breach of the oath you had imposed upon him; and that this was the cause of your displeasure.

I would have been glad to see how my charmer then looked. —To be sure she was at a loss in her own mind, to justify herself for resenting so highly an offence so trifling.—She hesitated—did not presently speak.—When she did, she wished that she (Miss Rawlins) might never meet with any man who would take such innocent liberties with *her*.

Miss Rawlins pushed further.

Your case, to be sure, Madam, is very particular: but if the hope of a reconciliation with your own friends is made more distant by your leaving him, give me leave to say, that 'tis pity—'tis pity—[I suppose the maiden then primmed, fanned, and blushed;—'tis pity] the oath cannot be dispensed with; especially as he owns he has not been so strict a liver.

I could have gone in and kissed the girl.

Cl. You have heard *his* story. Mine, as I told you before, is too long, and too melancholy: my disorder on seeing the wretch is too great; and my time here is too short, for me to enter upon it. And if he has any end to serve by his own vindication, in which I shall not be a *personal* sufferer, let him make himself appear as white as an angel, with all my heart.

My love for her, and the excellent character I gave her, were then pleaded.

Cl. Specious seducer!—Only tell me if I cannot get away from him by some back way?

How my heart then went *pit-a-pit*, to speak in the female dialect.

Cl. Let me look out—[I heard the sash lifted up.]—Whither does that path lead? Is there no possibility of getting to a coach? Surely he must deal with some fiend, or how could he have found me out? Cannot I steal to some neighbouring house, where I may be concealed till I can get quite away? You are good people!—I have not been always among such!—Oh, help me, help me, ladies! [with a voice of impatience], or I am ruined!

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Then pausing, Is that the way to Hendon? [pointing, I suppose]. Is Hendon a private place?—The Hampstead coach, I am told, will carry passengers thither.

Mrs. Moore. I have an honest friend at Mill-hill [Devil fetch her! thought I], where, if such be your determination, Madam, and if you think yourself in danger, you may be safe, I believe.

Cl. Anywhere, if I can but escape from *this man!* Whither does that path lead, out yonder?—What is that town on the right hand called?

Mrs. Moore. Highgate, Madam.

Miss R. On the side of the heath is a little village, called North-end. A kinswoman of mine lives there. But her house is small. I am not sure she could accommodate such a lady.

Devil take *her* too! thought I.—I imagined that I had made myself a better interest in these women. But the whole sex love plotting—and plotters too, Jack.

Cl. A barn, an outhouse, a garret, will be a palace to me, if it will but afford me a refuge from *this man!*

Her senses, thought I, are much livelier than *mine.*—What a devil have I done, that she should be so very implacable? I told thee, Belford, all I did: was there anything in it so *very* much amiss? Such prospects of family reconciliation before her too! To be sure she is a very *sensible* lady!

She then espied my new servant walking under the window, and asked if he were not one of mine?

Will. was on the look out for old Grimes [so is the fellow called whom my beloved has despatched to Miss Howe]. And being told that the man she saw *was* my servant; I see, said she, that there is no escaping, unless you, Madam [to Miss Rawlins, I suppose], can befriend me till I can get farther. I have no doubt that the fellow is planted about the house to watch my steps. But the wicked wretch his master has no *right to control me.* He shall not hinder me from going where I please. I will raise the town upon him, if he molests me. Dear ladies, is there no back door for me to get out at while you hold him in talk?

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Miss R. Give me leave to ask you, Madam, Is there no room to hope for accommodation? Had you not better see him? He certainly loves you dearly: he is a fine gentleman; you may exasperate him, and make matters more unhappy for yourself.

Cl. O Mrs. Moore! O Miss Rawlins! you know not the man! I wish not to see his face, nor to exchange another word with him as long as I live.

Mrs. Moore. I don't find, Miss Rawlins, that the gentleman has misrepresented anything. You see, Madam [to my Clarissa], how respectful he is; not to come in tell permitted. He certainly loves you dearly. Pray, Madam, let him talk to you, as he wishes to do, on the subject of the letters.

Very kind of Mrs. Moore!—Mrs. Moore, thought I, is a very good woman. I did not curse her *then*.

Miss Rawlins said something; but so low that I could not hear what it was. Thus it was answered.

Cl. I am greatly distressed! I know not what to do!—But, Mrs. Moore, be so good as to give his letters to him—here they are.—Be pleased to tell him that I wish him and Lady Betty and Miss Montague a happy meeting. He never can want excuses to them for what has happened, any more than pretences to those he would delude. Tell him that he has ruined me in the opinion of my own friends. I am for that reason the less solicitous how I appear to his.

Mrs. Moore then came to me; and I, being afraid that something would pass meantime between the other two, which I should not like, took the letters, and entered the room, and found them retired into the closet; my beloved whispering with an air of earnestness to Miss Rawlins, who was all attention.

Her back was towards me; and Miss Rawlins, by pulling her sleeve, giving intimation of my being there—Can I have no retirement uninvaded, sir? said she, with indignation, as if she were interrupted in some talk her heart was in.—What business have you here, or with me?—You have your letters; have you not?

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Lovel. I have, my dear; and let me beg of you to consider what you are about. I every moment expect Captain Tomlinson here. Upon my soul, I do. He has promised to keep from your uncle what has happened: but what will he think if he find you hold in this strange humour?

Cl. I will endeavour, sir, to have patience with you for a moment or two, while I ask you a few questions before this lady, and before Mrs. Moore [who just then came in], both of whom you have prejudiced in your favour by your specious stories:—Will you say, sir, that we are married together? Lay your hand upon your heart, and answer me, am I your wedded wife?

I am gone too far, thought I, to give up for such a push as this, home one as it is.

My dearest soul! how can you put such a question? Is it either for *your* honour or *my own,* that it should be doubted?—Surely, surely, Madam, you cannot have attended to the contents of Captain Tomlinson's letter.

She complained often of want of spirits throughout our whole contention, and of weakness of person and mind, from the fits she had been thrown into: but little reason had *she* for this complaint, as I thought, who was able to hold me to it, as she did. I own that I was excessively concerned for her several times.

You and I! *Vilest of men!*——

My name is Lovelace, Madam——

Therefore it is that I call you the *vilest of men.* [Was this pardonable, Jack!]—*You* and *I* know the truth, the *whole* truth.—I want not to clear up my reputation with these gentlewomen:—that is already lost with every one I had most reason to value: but let me have this *new* specimen of what you are capable of—say wretch (say, Lovelace, if thou hadst rather), art thou really and truly my wedded husband?—Say; answer without hesitation.

She trembled with impatient indignation: but had a wildness in her manner, which I took some advantage of, in order to parry this cursed thrust. And a cursed thrust it was; since, had I positively averred it, she never would have

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believed anything I said: and had I owned that I was not married, I had destroyed my own plot, as well with the women as with her; and could have no pretence for pursuing her, or hindering her from going wheresoever she pleased. Not that I was ashamed to aver it, had it been consistent with policy. I would not have thee think me such a milk-sop neither.

Lovel. My dearest love, how wildly you talk! What would you *have* me answer? Is it necessary that I should answer? May I not re-appeal this to your own breast, as well as to Captain Tomlinson's treaty and letter? You know yourself how matters stand between us.—And Captain Tomlinson——

Cl. Oh, wretch! Is this an answer to my question? Say, are we married, or are we not?

Lovel. What *makes a marriage*, we all know. If it be the union of two hearts [there was a turn, Jack!] to my utmost grief, I must say we are *not*; since now I see you hate me. If it be the completion of marriage, to my confusion and regret, I must own we are *not*. But, my dear, will you be pleased to consider what answer half a dozen people whence you came could give to your question? And do not now, in *the disorder of your mind*, and the height of passion, bring into question before these gentlewomen a point you have acknowledged before those who know us better.

I would have whispered her about the treaty with her uncle, and about the contents of the Captain's letter; but, retreating, and with a rejecting hand, Keep thy distance, *man*, cried the dear insolent—to thine own heart I appeal, since thou evadest me thus pitifully!—I own no marriage with thee!—Bear witness, ladies, I do not. And cease to torment me, cease to follow me.—Surely, surely, faulty as I have been, I have not deserved to be *thus* persecuted!—I resume, therefore, my former language: you have no right to pursue me: you *know* you have not: begone then, and leave me to make the best of my hard lot. Oh, my dear, cruel father! said she, in a violent fit of grief [falling upon

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her knees, and clasping her uplifted hands together], thy heavy curse is completed upon thy devoted daughter! I am *punished*, dreadfully punished, *by the very wretch in whom I had placed my wicked confidence!*

By my soul, Belford, the little witch with her words, but more by her manner, moved *me!* Wonder not then that her action, her grief, her tears, set the women into the like compassionate manifestations.

Had I not a cursed task of it?

The two women withdrew to the further end of the room, and whispered—A strange case! There is no phrensy here —I just heard said.

The charming creature threw her handkerchief over her head and neck, continuing kneeling, her back towards me, and her face hid upon a chair, and repeatedly sobbed with grief and passion.

I took this opportunity to step to the women to keep them steady.

You see, ladies [whispering], what an unhappy man I am! You see what a spirit this dear creature has!—All, all owing to her implacable relations, and to her father's curse. —A curse upon them all! they have turned the head of the most charming woman in the world!

Ah! sir, sir, replied Miss Rawlins, whatever be the fault of her relations, all is not as it should be between you and her. 'Tis plain she does not think herself married: 'tis plain she does not: and if you have any value for the poor lady, and would not totally deprive her of her senses, you had better withdraw, and leave to time and cooler consideration the event in your favour.

She will compel me to this at last, I fear, Miss Rawlins; I *fear* she will; and then we are both undone: for I cannot live without her; she knows it too well: and she has not a friend who will look upon her: this also she knows. Our marriage, when her uncle's friend comes, will be proved incontestably. But I am ashamed to think I have given her room to believe it no marriage: that's what she harps upon!

Well, 'tis a strange case, a very strange one, said Miss

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Rawlins; and was going to say further, when the angry beauty, coming towards the door, said, Mrs. Moore, I beg a word with you. And they both stepped into the dining-room.

I saw her just before put a parcel into her pocket; and followed them out, for fear she should slip away; and stepping to the stairs, that she *might not go by me*, Will., cried I, aloud [though I knew he was not near]—Pray, child, to a maid who answered, call either of my servants to me.

She then came up to me with a wrathful countenance: Do you call your servant, sir, to hinder me, between you, from going where I please?

Don't, my dearest life, misinterpret everything I do. Can you think me so mean and unworthy as to employ a servant to constrain you?—I call him to send to the public-houses, or inns in this town, to inquire after Captain Tomlinson, who may have alighted at some one of them, and be now, perhaps, needlessly adjusting his dress; and I would have him come, were he to be without clothes, God forgive me! for I am stabbed to the heart by your cruelty.

Answer was returned that neither of my servants was in the way.

Not in the way, said I!—Whither can the dogs be gone?

Oh, sir! with a scornful air; not far, I'll warrant. One of them was under the window just now; according to order, I suppose, to watch my steps—but I will do what I please, and go where I please; and that to your face.

God forbid that I should hinder you in anything that you may do with safety to yourself!

Now I verily believe that her design was to slip out, in pursuance of the closet-whispering between her and Miss Rawlins; perhaps to Miss Rawlins's house.

She then stepped back to Mrs. Moore, and gave her something, which proved to be a diamond ring, and desired her [not whisperingly, but with an air of defiance to me] that that might be a pledge for her, till she defrayed her demands; which she should soon find means to do; having no more money about her than she might have occasion for before she came to an acquaintance's.

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Mrs. Moore would have declined taking it; but she would not be denied; and then, wiping her eyes, she put on her gloves—nobody has a right to stop me, said she!—I *will* go!—Whom should I be afraid of?—Her very question, charming creature: testifying her fear.

I beg pardon, Madam [turning to Mrs. Moore, and courtesying], for the trouble I have given you.—I beg pardon, Madam, to Miss Rawlins [courtesying likewise to her],—you may both hear of me in a happier hour, if such a one fall to my lot—and God bless you both!—struggling with her tears till she sobbed—and away was tripping.

I stepped to the door: I put it to; and setting my back against it took her struggling hand.—My dearest life! my angel! said I, why will you thus distress me?—Is this the forgiveness which you so solemnly promised?

Unhand me, sir!—You have no business with me! You have no right over me! You *know* you have not.

But whither, whither, my dearest love, would you go!—Think you not that I will follow you, were it to the world's end!—Whither would you go?

Well do you ask me, whither I would go, who have been the occasion that I have not a friend left!—But God, who knows my innocence, and my upright intentions, will not wholly abandon me when I am out of your power; but while I am in it, I cannot expect a gleam of the divine grace of favour to reach me.

How severe is this!—How shockingly severe!—Out of *your* presence, my angry fair one, I can neither hope for the one nor the other. As my cousin Montague, in the letter you have read, observes, you are my polar star and my guide, and if ever I am to be happy, either here or hereafter, it must be in and by you.

She would then have opened the door. But I, respectfull opposing her, Begone, man! Begone, Mr. Lovelace! said she, stop not my way. If you would not that I should attempt the window, give me passage by the door; for, once more, you have *no right to detain me.*

Your resentments, my dearest life, I will own to be well

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grounded. I will acknowledge that I have been all in fault. On my knee [and down I dropped], I ask your pardon. And can you refuse to ratify your own *promise?* Look forward to the happy prospect before us. See you not my Lord M. and Lady Sarah longing to bless *you*, for blessing me, and their whole family? Can you take no pleasure in the promised visit of Lady Betty and my cousin Montague? And in the protection *they* offer you, if you are dissatisfied with *mine?* Have you no wish to see your uncle's friend? Stay only till Captain Tomlinson comes. Receive from him the news of your uncle's compliance with the wishes of both.

She seemed altogether distressed; was ready to sink; and forced to lean against the wainscot, as I kneeled at her feet. A stream of tears at last burst from her less indignant eyes. Good Heaven! said she, lifting up her lovely face, and clasped hands, what is at last to be my destiny? Deliver me from this dangerous man; and direct me—I know not what I do, what I can do, nor what I ought to do!

The women, as I had owned our marriage to be but half completed, heard nothing in this whole scene to contradict (not flagrantly to contradict) what I had asserted. They believed they saw in her returning temper, and staggered resolution, a love for me, which her indignation had before suppressed; and they joined to persuade her to tarry till the Captain came, and to hear his proposals; representing the dangers to which she would be exposed; the fatigues she might endure; a lady of her appearance, unguarded, unprotected. On the other hand they dwelt upon my declared contrition, and on my promises; for the performance of which they offered to be bound. So much had my kneeling humility affected them.

Women, Jack, tacitly acknowledge the inferiority of their sex, in the pride they take to behold a kneeling lover at their feet.

She turned from me, and threw herself into a chair.

I arose and approached her with reverence. My dearest creature, said I, and was proceeding, but, with a face glowing with conscious dignity, she interrupted me—Ungenerous,

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ungrateful Lovelace! You know not the value of the heart you have insulted! Nor can you conceive how much my soul despises your meanness. But meanness must ever be the portion of the man who can act vilely!

The women, believing we were likely to be on better terms, retired. The dear perverse opposed their going; but they saw I was desirous of their absence; and when they had withdrawn, I once more threw myself at her feet, and acknowledged my offences; implored her forgiveness for this one time, and promised the most exact circumspection for the future.

It was impossible for her she said to keep her *memory* and *forgive* me. What hadst thou *seen* in the conduct of Clarissa Harlowe, that should encourage such an insult upon her as thou didst dare to make? How meanly must thou think of *her*, that *thou* couldst presume to be so guilty, and expect *her* to be so weak as to forgive thee?

I besought her to let me read over to her Captain Tomlinson's letter. I was sure it was impossible she could have given it the requisite attention.

I *have* given it the requisite attention, said she; and the other letters too. So that what I say is upon deliberation. And what have I to fear from my brother and sister? They can but *complete* the ruin of my fortunes with my father and uncles. Let them and welcome. You, sir, I thank you, have lowered my fortunes; but, I bless God, that my mind is not sunk with my fortunes. It is, on the contrary, raised above fortune, and above you; and for half a word they shall have the estate they have envied me for, and an acquittal from me of all expectations from my family that may make them uneasy.

I lifted up my hands and eyes in silent admiration of her.

My brother, sir, may think me ruined; to the praise of *your* character, he may think it impossible to be with *you* and be innocent. You have but too well justified their harshest censures by every part of your conduct. But now that I have escaped from you, and that I am out of the reach of your mysterious devices, I will wrap myself up in

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mine own innocence [and then the passionate beauty folded her arms about herself], and leave to time, and to my future circumspection, the re-establishment of my character. Leave me then, sir, pursue me not!——

Good Heaven! [interrupting her]—and all this, for what? —Had I *not* yielded to your entreaties (forgive me, Madam), you could not have carried further your resentments——

Wretch! Was it not crime enough to give *occasion* for those *entreaties?* Wouldst thou make a merit to me, that thou didst not utterly ruin *her* whom thou oughtest to have protected? Begone, man! (turning from me, her face crimsoned over with passion).—See me no more!—I cannot bear thee in my sight!—

Dearest, dearest creature!

If I forgive thee, Lovelace—and there she stopped.—To endeavour, proceeded she, to endeavour by *premeditation,* by *low contrivance,* by *cries of Fire!* to terrify a poor creature who had consented to take a wretched chance with thee for life!

For Heaven's sake,—offering to take her repulsing hand, as she was flying from me towards the closet.

What hast thou to do to plead for the sake of Heaven in thy favour!—Oh, darkest of human minds!

Then turning *from me,* wiping her eyes, and again turning *towards me,* but her sweet face half aside, What difficulties hast thou involved me in! *That thou hadst a plain path before thee,* after thou hadst betrayed me into thy power.—At once my mind takes in the whole of thy crooked behaviour; and if thou thinkest of Clarissa Harlowe as her proud heart tells her thou oughtest to think of her, thou wilt seek thy fortunes elsewhere. How often hast thou provoked me to tell thee that my soul is above thee!

For Heaven's sake, Madam, for a soul's sake, which it is in your power to save from perdition, forgive me the past offence. I am the greatest villain on earth if it was a premeditated one; yet I presume not to excuse myself. On your mercy I throw myself. I will not offer at any plea but that of penitence. See but Captain Tomlinson.—

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See but Lady Betty and my cousin; let *them* plead for me; let *them* be guarantees for my honour.

If Captain Tomlinson come while I stay here, I may see *him;* but as for *you,* sir——

Dearest creature! let me beg of you not to aggravate my offence to the Captain when he comes. Let me beg of you——

What askest thou? Is it not that I shall be of party against myself? That I shall palliate——

Do not charge me, Madam, interrupted I, with villainous premeditation!—Do not give such a construction to my offence as may weaken your uncle's opinion—as may strengthen your brother's——

She flung from me to the further end of the room [*she could go no further*], and just then Mrs. Moore came up, and told her that dinner was ready, and that she had prevailed upon Miss. Rawlins to give her her company.

You must excuse me, Mrs. Moore, said she. Miss Rawlins I hope also will—but I cannot eat—I cannot go down. As for *you,* sir, I suppose you will think it right to depart hence; at least till the gentleman comes whom you expect.

I respectfully withdrew into the next room, that Mrs. Moore might acquaint her (I durst not myself) that I was her lodger and boarder, as, whisperingly, I desired she would; and meeting Miss Rawlins in the passage, Dearest Miss Rawlins, said I, stand my friend; join with Mrs. Moore to pacify my spouse, if she has any new flights upon my having taken lodgings, and intending to board here. I hope she will have more generosity than to think of hindering a gentlewoman from letting her lodgings.

I suppose Mrs. Moore (whom I left with my fair one) had apprised her of this before Miss Rawlins went in; for I heard her say, while I withheld Miss Rawlins,—'No, 'indeed: he is much mistaken—surely he does not think 'I will.'

They both expostulated with her, as I could gather from bits and scraps of what they said; for they spoke so low

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that I could not hear any distinct sentence, but from the fair perverse, whose anger made her louder. And to this purpose I heard her deliver herself in answer to different parts of their talk to her:—'Good Mrs. Moore, dear Miss Rawlins, press me no further:—I cannot sit down at table with him!'

They said something, as I suppose in my behalf—'Oh, the 'insinuating wretch! What defence have I against a man, 'who, go where I will, can turn every one, even of the 'virtuous of my sex, in his favour?'

After something else said, which I heard not distinctly 'This is execrable cunning!—Were you to know his wicked 'heart, he is not without hope of engaging you two good 'persons to second him in the vilest of his machinations.'

How came she (thought I, at the instant) by all this penetration? My devil surely does not play me booty. If I thought he did, I would marry, and live honest, to be even with him.

I suppose then they urged the plea which I hinted to Miss Rawlins at going in, that she would not be Mrs. Moore's hindrance; for thus she expressed herself—'He 'will no doubt pay you your own price. You need not 'question his liberality; but one house cannot hold us.—'Why, if it would, did I fly from him, to seek refuge 'among strangers?'

Then, in answer to somewhat else they pleaded—''Tis 'a mistake, Madam; I am *not* reconciled to him, I will 'believe nothing he says. Has he not given you a flagrant 'specimen of what a man he is, and of what he is capable, 'by the disguises you saw him in? My story is too long, 'and my stay here will be but short; or I could convince 'you that my resentments against him are but too well 'founded.'

I suppose then they pleaded for *her* leave for *my* dining with them; for she said—'I have nothing to say to that; 'it is your own house, Mrs. Moore—it is your own table; 'you may admit whom you please to it, only leave me 'at my liberty to choose my company.'

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Then in answer, as I suppose, to their offer of sending her up a plate—'A bit of bread, if you please, and a glass 'of water; that's all I can swallow at present. I am really 'very much discomposed. Saw you not how bad I was? 'Indignation only could have supported my spirits!—

'I have no objections to his dining with you, Madam;' added she, in reply, I suppose, to a farther question of the same nature—'But I will not stay a night in the house 'where he lodges.'

I presume Miss Rawlins had told her that she would not stay dinner: for she said,—'Let me not deprive Mrs. 'Moore of your company, Miss Rawlins. You will not be 'displeased with his talk. He can have no design upon you.'

Then I suppose they pleaded what I might say behind her back, to make my own story good:—'I care not what he 'says or what he thinks of me. Repentance and amendment 'are all the harm I wish him, whatever becomes of me!'

By her accent she wept when she spoke these last words.

They came out both of them wiping their eyes; and would have persuaded me to relinquish the lodgings, and to depart till her uncle's friend came. But I knew better. I did not care to trust the Devil, well as she and Miss Howe suppose me to be acquainted with him, for finding her out again, if once more she escaped me.

What I am most afraid of is, that she will throw herself among her own relations; and, if she does, I am confident they will not be able to withstand her affecting eloquence. But yet, as thou'lt see, the Captain's letter to me is admirably calculated to obviate my apprehensions on this score; particularly in that passage where it is said, that her uncle thinks not himself at liberty to correspond directly with her, or to receive applications from her—*but through Captain Tomlinson*, as is strongly implied.*

I must own (notwithstanding the revenge I have so solemnly vowed) that I would very fain have made for her a merit with myself *in her returning favour*, and have owed as little as possible to the mediation of Captain Tomlinson. My

* See Letter LIX. of this volume.

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pride was concerned in this: and this was one of my reasons for not bringing him with me.—Another was, that if I were obliged to have recourse to his assistance, I should be better able (by visiting her without him), to direct him what to say or do, as I should find out the turn of her humour.

I was, however, glad at my heart that Mrs. Moore came up so seasonably with notice that dinner was ready. The fair fugitive was all in all. She had the game in her own hands; and by giving me so good an excuse for withdrawing, I had time to strengthen myself; the captain had time to come; and the lady to cool.—Shakspeare advises well:

> Oppose not rage, whilst rage is in its force;
> But give it way awhile, and let it waste.
> The rising deluge is not stopt with dams.
> Those it o'erbears, and drowns the hope of harvest.
> But, wisely managed, its divided strength
> Is sluiced in channels, and securely drained:
> And when its force is spent, and unsupplied,
> The residue with mounds may be restrain'd,
> And dry-shod we may pass the naked ford.

I went down with the women to dinner. Mrs. Moore sent her fair boarder up a plate, but she only ate a little bit of bread, and drank a glass of water. I doubted not but she would keep her word, when it was once gone out. Is she not a Harlowe? She seems to be enuring herself to hardships, which at the worst she can never know; since, though she should ultimately refuse to be obliged to me, or (to express myself more suitable to my own heart), to *oblige me*, every one who sees her must befriend her.

But let me ask thee, Belford, art thou not solicitous for me in relation to the contents of the letter which the angry beauty had written and despatched away by man and horse; and for what may be Miss Howe's answer to it? Art thou not ready to inquire, whether it be not likely that Miss Howe, when she knows of her saucy friend's flight, will be concerned about her letter, which she must know could not be at Wilson's till after that flight, and so, probably, would fall into my hands?—

All these things, as thou'lt see in the sequel, are provided for with as much contrivance as human foresight can admit.

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I have already told thee that Will. is upon the look-out for old Grimes—old Grimes is, it seems, a gossiping, sottish rascal; and if Will. can but light of him, I'll answer for the consequence; for has not Will. been my servant upwards of seven years?

—o—

LETTER LXII.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

We had at dinner, besides Miss Rawlins, a young widow-niece of Mrs. Moore, who is come to stay a month with her aunt—*Bevis* her name; very forward, very lively, and a great admirer of *me*, I assure you;—hanging smirkingly upon all I said; and prepared to approve of every word before I spoke: and who, by the time we had half dined (by the help of what she had collected before), was as much acquainted with our story as either of the other two.

As it behoved me to prepare them in my favour against whatever might come from Miss Howe, I improved upon the hint I had thrown out above stairs against that mischief-making lady. I represented her to be an arrogant creature, revengeful, artful, enterprising, and one who, had she been a man, would have sworn and cursed, and committed rapes, and played the devil, as far as I knew: [*I have no doubt of it, Jack!*] but who, nevertheless, by advantage of a female education, and pride and insolence, I believed was *personally* virtuous.

Mrs. Bevis allowed that there was a *vast deal* in education—and in *pride* too, she said. While Miss Rawlins came with a prudish God forbid that virtue should be owing to education only! However, I declared that Miss Howe was a subtle contriver of mischief; one who had always been *my* enemy: her motives I knew not: but despised the man whom her mother was desirous she should have, one Hickman; although I did not directly aver that she would rather have had me; yet they all immediately imagined that *that* was the ground of her

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animosity to me, and of her envy to my beloved: and it was pity, they said, that so fine a young lady did not see through such a pretended friend.

And yet nobody [added I] has more reason than she to know by *experience* the force of a hatred founded in envy; as I hinted to *you* above, Mrs. Moore, and to *you*, Miss Rawlins, in the case of her sister Arabella.

I had compliments made to my person and talents on this occasion: which gave me a singular opportunity of displaying my modesty, by disclaiming the merit of them, with a *No, indeed!—I should be very vain, ladies, if I thought so.* While thus abusing myself, and exalting Miss Howe, I got their opinion both for modesty and generosity; and had all the graces which I disclaimed thrown in upon me besides.

In short, they even oppressed that modesty, which (to speak modestly of myself) their praises *created*, by disbelieving all I said against myself.

And, truly, I must needs say, they have almost persuaded even me myself, that Miss Howe is actually in love with me. I have often been willing to hope this. And who knows but she may? The captain and I have agreed, that it shall be so insinuated *occasionally*.—And what's thy opinion, Jack? She certainly hates Hickman; and girls who are *disengaged* seldom *hate*, though they may not *love:* and if she had rather have *another*, why not that *other* ME? For am I not a smart fellow, and a rake? And do not your sprightly ladies love your smart fellows, and your rakes? And where is the wonder, that the man who could engage the affections of Miss Harlowe, should engage those of a lady (with her* *alas's*) who would be honoured in being deemed her second?

Nor accuse thou me of SINGULAR vanity in this presumption, Belford. Wert thou to know the secret vanity that lurks in the hearts of those who *disguise* or *cloke it best*, thou wouldst find great reason to acquit, at least, to allow for *me:* since it is generally the *conscious over-fulness of conceit*, that makes the hypocrite most upon his guard to conceal it.

* See Letter LV. of this volume, where Miss Howe says, *Alas! my dear, I knew you loved him!*

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Yet with these fellows, proudly humble as they are, it will break out sometimes in spite of their clokes, though but in self-denying, compliment-begging self-degradation.

But now I have undervalued myself in apologising to thee on this occasion, let me use another argument in favour of my observation, that the ladies generally prefer a rake to a sober man; and of my presumption upon it, that Miss Howe is in love with me: it is this: cómmon fame says, That Hickman is a very virtuous, a very innocent fellow—*a male-virgin,* I warrant!—An odd dog I always thought him. Now women, Jack, like not novices. *Two maiden-heads meeting together in wedlock, the first child must be a fool,* is their common aphorism. They are pleased with a love of the sex that is founded in the *knowledge of it.* Reason good; novices expect more than they can possibly find in the commerce with them. The man who knows them, yet has ardours for them, to borrow a word from Miss Howe,* though those ardours are generally owing more to the *devil* within him, than to the witch *without* him, is the man who makes them the highest and most grateful compliment. He knows *what to expect,* and *with what to be satisfied.*

Then the merit of a woman, in some cases, must be *ignorance,* whether *real* or *pretended.* The man, in *these* cases, must be an *adept.* Will it then be wondered at, that a woman prefers a libertine to a novice?—While she expects in the one the confidence *she* wants, she considers the other and herself as two parallel lines, which, though they run side by side, can never meet.

Yet in this the sex is generally mistaken too; for these sheepish fellows are sly. I myself was modest once; and this, as I have elsewhere hinted to thee,† has better enabled me to judge of both sexes.

But to proceed with my narrative:

Having thus prepared every one against any letter should come from Miss Howe, and against my beloved's messenger's

* See vol. iv. Letters IX. and XIV.

† See vol. ii. Letter XXXVIII.

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returns, I thought it proper to conclude that subject with a hint that my spouse could not bear to have anything said *that reflected upon Miss Howe;* and, with a deep sigh, added, that I had been made very unhappy more than once by the ill-will of ladies whom I had never offended.

The widow Bevis believed that might very easily be.

These hints within-doors, joined with others to Will. both without and within [for I intend he shall fall in love with widow Moore's maid, and have saved one hundred pounds in my service, at least], will be great helps, as things may happen.

—o—

LETTER LXIII.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

We had hardly dined, when my coachman, who kept a look-out for Captain Tomlinson, as Will. did for old Grimes, conducted hither that worthy gentleman, attended by one servant, *both* on horseback. He alighted. I went out to meet him at the door.

Thou knowest his solemn appearance, and unblushing freedom; and yet canst not imagine what a dignity the rascal assumed, nor how respectful to him I was.

I led him into the parlour, and presented him to the women and them to him. I thought it highly imported me (as they might still have some diffidences about our marriage, from my fair one's home-pushed questions on that head) to convince them entirely of the truth of all I had asserted. And how could I do this better, than by dialoguing a little with him before them?

Dear Captain, I thought you long; for I have had a terrible conflict with my spouse.

Capt. I am sorry that I am later than my intention—my account with my banker—[There's a dog, Jack!] took me up longer time to adjust than I had foreseen [all the time

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pulling down and stroking his ruffles]: for there was a small difference between us—only twenty pounds, indeed, which I had taken no account of.

The rascal has not seen twenty pounds of his own these ten years.

Then had we between us the characters of the Harlowe family; I railed against them all; the Captain taking his dear friend Mr. John Harlowe's part; with a *Not so fast!—not so fast, young gentleman!*—and the like free assumptions.

He accounted for *their* animosity by *my* defiances: no good family, having such a charming daughter, would care to be *defied*, instead of *courted:* he *must* speak his mind: never was a double-tongued man.—He appealed to the ladies, if he were not right?

He got them of his side.

The correction I had given the brother, he told me, must have aggravated matters.

How valiant this made me look to the women!—The sex love us mettled fellows at their hearts.

Be that as it would, I should never love any of the family but my spouse; and wanting nothing from them, I would not, but for *her* sake, have gone so far as I *had* gone towards a reconciliation.

This was very good of me; Mrs. Moore said.

Very good indeed; Miss Rawlins.

Good;—it is *more* than good; it is very generous; said the widow.

Capt. Why so it is, I must needs say: for I am sensible that Mr. Lovelace has been rudely treated by them all—more rudely, than it could have been imagined a man of his *quality* and *spirit* would have put up with. But then, sir [turning to me], I think you are amply rewarded in such a lady; and that you ought to forgive the father for the daughter's sake.

Mrs. Moore. Indeed so I think.

Miss R. So must every one think who has seen the lady.

Widow B. A fine lady, to be sure! But she has a violent spirit; and some very odd humours too, by what I have

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heard. The value of good husbands is not known till they are lost!

Her conscience then drew a sigh from her.

Lovel. Nobody must reflect upon my angel!—An angel she is—some little blemishes, indeed, as to her over hasty spirit, and as to her unforgiving temper. But this she has from the Harlowes; instigated too by *that* Miss Howe.—But her innumerable excellences are all her own.

Capt. Ay, talk of spirit, there's a spirit, now you have named Miss Howe! [And so I led him to confirm all I had said of that vixen]. Yet she was to be pitied too; looking with meaning at me.

As I have already hinted, I had before agreed with him to impute secret love *occasionally* to Miss Howe, as the best means to invalidate all that might come from her in my disfavour.

Capt. Mr. Lovelace, but that I know your modesty, or *you* could give a reason——

Lovel. Looking down, and very modest—I can't think so, Captain—but let us call another cause.

Every woman present could look me in the face, so bashful was I.

Capt. Well, but as to our *present* situation—only it mayn't be proper—looking upon me, and round upon the women.

Lovel. O Captain, you may say anything before this company—only, Andrew [to my new servant, who attended us at table], do you withdraw: this good girl [looking at the maid-servant] will help us to all we want.

Away went Andrew: he wanted not his cue; and the maid seemed pleased at my honour's preference of her.

Capt. As to our *present* situation, I say, Mr. Lovelace—why, sir, we shall be all *untwisted,* let me tell you, if my friend Mr. John Harlowe were to know what *that* is. He would as much question the truth of your being married, as the rest of the family do.

Here the women perked up their ears; and were all silent attention.

Capt. I asked you before for particulars, Mr. Lovelace;

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but you *declined giving them.*—Indeed it may not be *proper* for me to be acquainted with them.—But I must own that it is past my comprehension, that a wife can resent anything a husband can do (that is not a breach of the peace) so far as to think herself justified for *eloping* from him.

Lovel. Captain Tomlinson:—sir—I do assure you that I shall be offended—I shall be extremely concerned—if I hear that word *eloping* mentioned again——

Capt. Your nicety and your love, sir, may make you take offence—but it is my way to call everything by its proper name, let who will be offended.

Thou canst not imagine, Belford, how brave and how independent the rascal looked.

Capt. When, *young gentleman,* you shall think proper to give us particulars, we will find a word for this rash act in so admirable a lady, that shall please you better.—You see, sir, that being the representative of my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe, I speak as freely as I suppose *he* would do, if present. But you blush, sir—I beg your pardon, Mr. Lovelace: it becomes not a modest man to pry into those secrets which a modest man cannot reveal.

I did not blush, Jack; but denied not the compliment, and looked down: the women seemed delighted with my modesty: but the widow Bevis was more inclined to laugh at me than praise me for it.

Capt. Whatever be the cause of this step (I will not again, sir, call it *elopement,* since that harsh word wounds your tenderness), I cannot but express my surprise upon it, when I recollect the affectionate behaviour, to which I was witness between you when I attended you last. *Over love,* sir, I think you once mention—but *over love* [smiling] give me leave to say, sir, it is an odd cause of quarrel—few ladies——

Lovel. Dear Captain!—And I tried to blush.

The women also tried; and being more used to it, succeeded better.—Mrs. Bevis indeed has a red-hot countenance, and always blushes.

Miss R. It signifies nothing to mince the matter: but

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the lady above as good as denies her marriage. You *know*, sir, that she does; turning to me.

Capt. Denies her marriage! Heavens! how then have I imposed upon my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe!

Lovel. Poor dear!—but let not her *veracity* be called in question. She would not be guilty of a wilful untruth for the world.

Then I had all their praises again.

Lovel. Dear creature!—She thinks she has reason for her denial. You know, Mrs. Moore; you know, Miss Rawlins; what I owned to you above as to my vow.

I looked down, and as once before, turned round my diamond ring.

Mrs. Moore looked awry, and with a leer at Miss Rawlins, as to her partner in the hinted at reference.

Miss Rawlins looked down as well as I; her eyelids half closed, as if mumbling a paternoster, meditating her snuff-box, the distance between her nose and chin lengthened by a close shut mouth.

She put me in mind of the pious Mrs. Fetherstone at Oxford, whom I pointed out to thee once, among other grotesque figures, at St. Mary's church, whither we went to take a view of her two sisters: her eyes shut, not daring to trust her heart with them open; and but just half rearing her lids, to see who the next comer was; and falling them again, when her curiosity was satisfied.

The widow Bevis gazed as if on the hunt for a secret.

The Captain looked archly, as if half in the possession of one.

Mrs. Moore at last broke the bashful silence. Mrs. Lovelace's behaviour, she said, could be no otherwise so well accounted for, as by the ill offices of *that* Miss Howe; and by the severity of her relations; which might but too probably have affected her head a little at times: adding that it was very generous in me to give way to the storm when it was up, rather than to exasperate at such a time.

But let me tell you, sirs, said the widow Bevis, that is not what one husband in a thousand would have done.

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I desired that *no part of this conversation might be hinted to my spouse;* and looked still more bashfully. Her great fault, I must own, was over-delicacy.

The Captain leered round him; and said, he believed he could guess from the hints I had given him in town (of my *over love*), and from what had now passed, that we had not consummated our marriage.

O Jack! how sheepishly then looked, or endeavoured to look, thy friend! how primly goody Moore! how affectedly Miss Rawlins!—while the honest widow Bevis gazed around her fearless; and though only simpering with her mouth, her eyes laughed outright, and seemed to challenge a laugh from every eye in the company.

He observed that I was a phœnix of a man, if so; and he could not but hope that all matters would be happily accommodated in a day or two; and that then he should have the pleasure to aver to her uncle that he was present, as he might say, on our wedding-day.

The women seemed all to join in the same hope.

Ah, Captain! Ah, ladies! how happy should I be, if I could bring my dear spouse to be of the same mind!

It would be a very happy conclusion of a very knotty affair, said widow Bevis; and I see not why we may not make this very night a merry one.

The Captain superciliously smiled at me. He saw plainly enough, he said, that we had been at *children's play* hitherto. A man of my character, who could give way to such a caprice as this, must have a prodigious value for his lady. But one thing he would venture to tell me; and that was this—that, however desirous young skittish ladies might be to have their way in this particular, it was a very bad setting-out for the man; as it gave his bride a very high proof of the power she had over him: and he would engage that no woman, *thus* humoured, ever valued the man the more for it; but very much the contrary—and there were *reasons to be given why she should not.*

Well, well, Captain, no more of this subject before the ladies.—*One* feels [shrugging my shoulders in a bashful *try-*

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to-blush manner] that *one* is *so* ridiculous—I have been punished enough for my tender folly.

Miss Rawlins had taken her fan, and would needs hide her face behind it—I suppose because her blush was not quite ready.

Mrs. Moore hemmed, and looked down; and by that gave hers over.

While the jolly widow, laughing out, praised the Captain as one of Hudibras's metaphysicians, repeating,

> He knew what's what, and that's as high
> As metaphysic wit can fly.

This made Miss Rawlins blush indeed:—Fie, fie, Mrs. Bevis! cried she, unwilling, I suppose, to be thought absolutely ignorant.

Upon the whole, I began to think that I had not made a bad exchange of our professing mother, for the unprofessing Mrs. Moore. And indeed the women and I, and my beloved too, all mean the same thing: we only differ about the manner of coming at the proposed end.

—o—

LETTER LXIV.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

It was now high time to acquaint my spouse that Captain Tomlinson was come. And the rather, as the maid told us that the lady had asked her if such a gentleman [describing him] was not in the parlour?

Mrs. Moore went up, and requested, in my name, that she would give us audience.

But she returned, reporting my beloved's desire that Captain Tomlinson would excuse her for the present. She was very ill. Her spirits were too weak to enter into conversation with him; and she must lie down.

I was vexed, and at first extremely disconcerted. The

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Captain was vexed too. And my concern, thou mayest believe, was the greater on *his account*.

She had been very much fatigued, I own. Her fits in the morning must have disordered her: and she had carried her resentment so high, that it was the less wonder she should find herself low, when her raised spirits had subsided. *Very* low, I may say; if sinkings are proportioned to risings; for she had been lifted up above the standard of a common mortal.

The Captain, however, sent up his own name, that if he could be admitted to drink one dish of tea with her, he should take it for a favour: and would go to town, and despatch some necessary business, in order, if possible, to leave his morning free to attend her.

But she pleaded a violent head-ache; and Mrs. Moore confirmed the plea to be just.

I would have had the Captain lodge there that night, as well in compliment to him, as introductory to my intention of entering myself upon my new-taken apartment: but his hours were of too much importance to him to stay the evening.

It was indeed very inconvenient for him, he said, to return in the morning; but he is willing to do all in his power to heal this breach, and that as well for the sakes of me and my lady, as for that of his dear friend Mr. John Harlowe; who must not know how far this misunderstanding had gone. He would therefore only drink one dish of tea with the ladies and me.

And accordingly, after he had done so, and I had had a little private conversation with him, he hurried away.

His fellow had given him, in the interim, a high character to Mrs. Moore's servants: and this reported by the widow Bevis (who being no proud woman, is *hail fellow well met*, as the saying is, with all her aunt's servants) he was a *fine* gentleman, a *discreet* gentleman, a man of *sense* and *breeding*, with them all: and it was pity, that, with such great business upon his hands, he should be obliged to come again.

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My life for yours, audibly whispered the widow Bevis, there is *humour* as well as *head-ache* in somebody's declining to see this worthy gentleman.—Ah, Lord! how happy might some people be if they would!

No perfect happiness in this world, said I, very gravely, and with a sigh; for the widow must know that I heard her. If we have not *real* unhappiness, we can make it, even from the overflowings of our good fortune.

Very true, and very true, the two widows. A charming observation! Mrs. Bevis. Miss Rawlins smiled *her* assent to it; and I thought she called me in her heart charming man! for she professes to be a great admirer of moral observations.

I had hardly taken leave of the Captain, and sat down again with the women, when Will. came; and calling me out, 'Sir, sir,' said he, grinning with a familiarity in his looks as if what he had to say entitled him to take liberties; 'I have got the fellow down!—I have got old Grimes—'hah, hah, hah, hah!—He is at the Lower Flask—almost 'in the condition of *David's sow*, and please your honour—'[the dog himself not much better] here is his letter—from '—from Miss Howe—ha, ha, ha, ha,' laughed the varlet; holding it fast, as if to make conditions with me, and to excite my praises as well as my impatience.

I could have knocked him down; but he would have his *say* out—'old Grimes knows not that I have the letter '—I must get back to him before he misses it—I only 'made a pretence to go out for a few minutes—but—'but'—and then the dog laughed again—'he *must* stay '—Old Grimes *must* stay—till I go back to pay the reckon-'ing.'

D—n the prater; grinning rascal! The letter! The letter!

He gathered in his *wide mothe*, as he calls it, and gave me the letter; but with a *strut*, rather than a *bow*; and then sidled off like one of widow Sorlings's dunghill cocks, exulting after a great feat performed. And all the time that I was holding up the billet to the light, to try to get at its

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contents without breaking the seal [for, despatched in a hurry; it had no cover], there stood he, laughing, shrugging, playing off his legs; now stroking his shining chin, now turning his hat upon his thumb! then leering in my face, flourishing with his head—O Christ! now and then cried the rascal—

What joy has this dog in mischief!—More than I can have in the completion of my most favourite purposes!—These fellows are ever happier than their masters.

I was once thinking to rumple up this billet till I had broken the seal. *Young* families [Miss Howe's is not an antient one] love ostentatious sealings: and it might have been supposed to have been squeezed in pieces in old Grimes's breeches-pocket. But I was glad to be *saved* the guilt as well as suspicion of having a hand in so dirty a trick; for thus much of the contents (enough for my purpose) I was enabled to scratch out in character without it; the folds depriving me only of a few connecting words, which I have supplied between hooks.

My Miss Harlowe, thou knowest, had *before* changed her name to *Miss* Lætitia Beaumont. Another *alias* now, Jack, to it; for this billet was directed to her by the name of *Mrs.* Harriot Lucas. I have learned her to be half a rogue, thou seest.

'I CONGRATULATE you, my dear, with all my heart and 'soul, upon [your escape] from the villain. [I long] for 'the particulars of all. [My mother] is out; but expecting 'her return every minute, I despatched [your] messenger 'instantly. [I will endeavour to come at] Mrs. Townsend 'without loss of time; and will write at large in a day or 'two, if in that time I can see her. [Meantime I] am 'excessively uneasy for a letter I sent you yesterday by 'Collins, [who must have left it at] Wilson's after you got 'away. [It is of very] great importance. [I hope the] 'villain has it not. I would not for the world [that he 'should.] Immediately send for it, if, by so doing, the 'place you are at [will not be] discovered. If he has it, let

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'me know it by some way [out of] hand. If not, you need not send.

'Ever, ever yours,

A. H.

'June 9.'

O Jack! what heart's-ease does this *interception* give me! —I sent the rascal back with the letter to old Grimes, and charged him to drink no deeper. He owned that he was *half-seas over*, as he phrased it.

Dog! said I, are you not to court one of Mrs. Moore's maids to-night?—

Cry your mercy, sir!—I will be sober.—I had forgot that —but old Grimes is plaguy tough, I thought I should never have got him down.

Away, villain! Let old Grimes come, and on horseback too, to the door——

He shall, and please your honour, if I can get him on the saddle, and if he can sit——

And charge him not to have alighted, nor to have seen *any*body——

Enough, sir, familiarly nodding his head to show he took me. And away went the villain—into the parlour, to the women, I.

In a quarter of an hour came old Grimes on horseback, waving to his saddle-bow, now on this side, now on that; his head, at others, joining to that of his more sober beast.

It looked very well to the women that I made no effort to speak to old Grimes (though I wished, *before them*, that I knew the contents of what he brought); but, on the contrary, desired that they would instantly let my spouse know that her messenger was returned.

Down she flew, violently as she had the head-ache!

Oh, how I prayed for an opportunity to be revenged of her for the ungrateful trouble she had given to her uncle's friend!

She took the letter from old Grimes with her own hands, and retired to an inner parlour to read it.

She presently came out again to the fellow, who had

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much ado to sit his horse. Here is your money, friend.—I thought you long: but what shall I do to get somebody to go to town immediately for me? I see *you* cannot.

Old Grimes took his money, let fall his hat in doffing it; had it given him, and rode away; his eyes isinglass, and set in his head, as I saw through the window, and in a manner speechless—all his language hiccup. My dog needed not to have gone so deep with this *tough* old Grimes. But the rascal was in his kingdom with him.

The lady applied to Mrs. Moore; she mattered not the price. Could a man and horse be engaged for her?—Only to go for a letter left for her, at one Mr. Wilson's in Pall Mall.

A poor neighbour was hired—a horse procured for him—he had his directions.

In vain did I endeavour to engage my beloved when she was below. Her head-ache, I suppose, returned.—She, like the rest of her sex, can be ill or well when she pleases.

I see her drift, thought I; it is to have all her lights from Miss Howe before she resolves, and to take her measures accordingly.

Up she went expressing great impatience about the letter she had sent for; and desired Mrs. Moore to let her know if I offered to send any of my servants to town—to get at the letter, I suppose, was her fear; but she might have been quite easy on that head; and yet, perhaps, would not, had she known that the worthy Captain Tomlinson (who will be in town before her messenger) will leave there the important letter, which I hope will help to pacify her, and reconcile her to me.

O Jack, Jack! thinkest thou that I will take all this roguish pains, and be so often called villain for nothing?

But yet, is it not taking pains to come at the finest creature in the world, not for a *transitory moment* only, but for one of our lives! The struggle only, Whether I am to have her in *my own way*, or in *hers?*

But now I know thou wilt be frightened out of thy wits for me—What, Lovelace! wouldest thou let her have a

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letter that will inevitably blow thee up; and blow up the mother, and all her nymphs!—yet not intend to reform, nor intend to marry?

Patience, puppy!—Canst thou not trust thy master?

—o—

LETTER LXV.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

I WENT up to my new taken apartment, and fell to writing in character, as usual. I thought I had made good my quarters, but the cruel creature, understanding that I intended to take up my lodgings there, declared with so much violence against it, that I was obliged to submit, and to accept of another lodging, about twelve doors off, which Mrs. Moore recommended. And all the advantage I could obtain was, that Will., unknown to my spouse, and for fear of a freak, should lie in the house.

Mrs. Moore, indeed, was unwilling to disoblige *either* of us. But Miss Rawlins was of opinion that nothing more ought to be allowed me: and yet Mrs. Moore owned that the refusal was a strange piece of tyranny to a husband, if I *were* a husband.

I had a good mind to make Miss Rawlins smart for it. Come and see Miss Rawlins, Jack.—If thou likest her, I'll get her for thee with a *wet-finger*, as the saying is!

The widow Bevis indeed stickled hard for me. [An innocent, or injured man, will have friends everywhere.] She said that to *bear much* with some wives, was to be obliged to bear more; and I reflected with a sigh, *that tame spirits must always be imposed upon.* And then, in my heart, I renewed my vows of revenge upon this haughty and perverse beauty.

The second fellow came back from town about nine o'clock, with Miss Howe's letter of Wednesday last. 'Col-'lins, *it seems*, when he left it, had desired that it might

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'be safely and speedily delivered into Miss Lætitia Beau-
'mont's own hands. But Wilson, understanding that
'neither she nor I were in town [*he could not know of our*
'*difference, thou must think*], resolved to take care of it till
'our return, in order to give it into one of our own hands;
'and now delivered it to her messenger.'

This was told her. Wilson, I doubt not, is in her favour upon it.

She took the letter with great eagerness; opened it in a hurry [am glad she did; yet, I believe all was right], before Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bevis [Miss Rawlins was gone home]; and said, she would not for the world that I should have had that letter, for the sake of her dear friend the writer, who had written to her very uneasily about it.

Her *dear friend!* repeated Mrs. Bevis, when she told me this:—such mischief makers are always deemed *dear friends* till they are found out!

The widow says that I am the finest gentleman she ever beheld.

I have found a warm kiss now and then very kindly taken.

I might be a very wicked fellow, Jack, if I were to do all the mischief in my power. But I am evermore for quitting a too easy prey to *reptile rakes!* What but difficulty (though the lady is an angel) engages me to so much perseverance here?—And *here, conquer or die!* is now the determination!

I HAVE just now parted with this honest widow. She called upon me at my new lodgings. I told her that I saw I must be further obliged to her in the course of this difficult affair. She must allow me to make her a handsome present when all was happily over. But I desired that she would take no notice of what should pass between us, *not even to her aunt;* for that she, as I saw, was in the power of Miss Rawlins: and Miss Rawlins, being a maiden gentlewoman, knew not the *right* and the *fit* in matrimonial matters, as she, my dear widow, did.

Very true: How *should* she? said Mrs. Bevis, proud of

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knowing—nothing! But, for her part, she desired no present. It was enough if she could contribute to reconcile man and wife, and disappoint mischief makers. She doubted not, that such an envious creature as Miss Howe was glad that Mrs. Lovelace had eloped—jealousy and love *was* Old Nick!

See, Belford, how charmingly things work between me and my new acquaintance, the widow!—Who knows but that she may, after a little farther intimacy (though I am banished the house on nights), contrive a midnight visit for me to my spouse, when all is still and fast asleep?

Where can a woman be safe, who has once entered the lists with a contriving and intrepid lover?

But as to this *letter*, methinkst thou sayest, of Miss Howe?

I knew thou wouldst be uneasy for me. But did not I tell thee that I had provided for everything. That I always took care to keep seals entire, and to preserve covers?* Was it not easy then, thinkest thou, to contrive a shorter letter out of a longer; and to copy the very words?

I can tell thee, it was so well ordered, that, not being suspected to have been in my hands, it was not easy to find me out. Had it been my beloved's hand, there would have been no imitating it for such a length. Her delicate and even mind is seen in the very cut of her letters. Miss Howe's hand is no bad one, but it is not so equal and regular. That little devil's natural impatience hurrying on her fingers, gave, I suppose, from the beginning, her handwriting, as well as the rest of her, its fits and starts, and those peculiarities, which, like strong muscular lines in a face, neither the pen nor the pencil can miss.

Hast thou a mind to see what it was I *permitted* Miss Howe to write to her lovely friend? Why then, read it here, as extracted from hers of Wednesday last, with a few additions of my own. The additions underscored.

My dearest Friend,—You will perhaps think that I have been too long silent. But I had begun two letters at

* See Letter LV. of this volume.

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different times since my last, and written a great deal each time; and with spirit enough I assure you; incensed as I was against the abominable wretch you are with; particularly on reading yours of the 21st of the past month.

The FIRST I intended to keep open till I could give you some account of my proceedings with Mrs. Townsend. It was some days before I saw her: and this intervenient space giving me time to reperuse what I had written, I thought it proper to lay that aside, and to write in a style a little less fervent; for you would have blamed me, I knew, for the freedom of some of my expressions [execrations, if you please]. And when I had gone a good way in the SECOND, the change in your prospects, on his communicating to you Miss Montague's letter, and his better behaviour, occasioning a change in your mind, I laid that aside also. And in this uncertainty thought I would wait to see the issue of affairs between you before I wrote again; believing that all would soon be decided one way or other.

Here I was forced to break off. I am *too little* my own mistress:—My mother * is always up and down—and watching as if I were writing to a fellow. What need I [she asks me] lock myself in,† if I am only reading past correspondences? For that is my pretence, when she comes poking in with her face sharpened to an edge, as I may say, by a curiosity that gives her more pain than pleasure.—The Lord forgive me; but I believe I shall huff her next time she comes in.

Do you forgive me too, my dear—my mother ought; because she says I am my father's girl; and because I am sure I am hers.

Upon my life, my dear, I am sometimes of opinion that this vile man was capable of meaning you dishonour. When I look back upon his past conduct, I cannot help thinking so. What a villain, if so!—But now I hope, and verily believe, that he has laid aside such thoughts. My reasons for both opinions I will give you.

* See Letter LV. of this volume. † Ibid.

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For the first: to wit, that he had it once in his head to take you at advantage if he could, I consider that* pride, revenge, and a delight to tread in unbeaten paths, are principal ingredients in the character of this finished libertine. He hates all your family, yourself excepted—yet is a savage in love. His pride, and the credit which a few plausible qualities, sprinkled among his odious ones, have given him, have secured him too good a reception from our eye-judging, our undistinguishing, our self-flattering, our too-confiding sex, to make assiduity and obsequiousness, and a conquest of his unruly passions, any part of his study.

He has some reason for his animosity to all the men, and to one woman of your family. He has always shown you, and his own family too, that he prefers his pride to his interest. He is a declared marriage-hater; a notorious intriguer; full of his inventions, and glorying in them.—As his vanity had made him imagine that no woman could be proof against his love, no wonder that he struggled like a lion held in toils,† against a passion that he thought not returned ‡. Hence, perhaps, it is not difficult to believe that it became possible for such a wretch as this to give way to his old prejudices against marriage; and to that revenge *which* had always been a first passion with him §.

And hence we may account for his delays—his teasing ways—his bringing you to bear with his lodging in the same house—his making you pass to the people of it as his wife—his bringing you into the company of his libertine companions—the attempt of imposing upon you that Miss Partington for a bed-fellow, &c.

My reasons for a contrary opinion, to wit, that he is now resolved to do you all the justice in his power to do you, are these:—That he sees that all his own family ‖ have warmly engaged themselves in your cause: that the horrid wretch loves you; with such a love, *however*, as Herod loved his Mariamne: that, on inquiry, I find it to be true that Counsellor Williams (whom Mr. Hickman knows to be a man of eminence in his profession) has actually as good as

* See Letter LV. of this volume. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. ‖ Ibid.

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finished the settlements: that two draughts of them have been made; one avowedly to be sent to *this very* Captain Tomlinson:—and I find that a license has actually been more than once endeavoured to be obtained, and that difficulties have hitherto been made, equally to Lovelace's vexation and disappointment. My mother's proctor, who is very intimate with the proctor applied to by the wretch, has come at this information in confidence; and hints, that as Mr. Lovelace is a man of high fortunes, these difficulties will probably be got over.

I had once resolved to make strict inquiry about Tomlinson; and still, if you will, your uncle's favourite housekeeper may be sounded at a distance.

*I know that the matter is so laid,** that Mrs. Hodges is supposed to know nothing of the treaty set on foot by means of Captain Tomlinson. But your uncle is an old man;† and old men imagine themselves to be under obligation to their paramours, if younger than themselves, and seldom keep anything from their knowledge.—Yet, methinks, there can be no need; since Tomlinson, as you describe him, is so good a man, and so much of a gentleman; the end to be answered by his being an impostor so much more than necessary, if Lovelace has villany in his head.—And thus what he communicated to you of Mr. Hickman's application to your uncle, and of Mrs. Norton's to your mother (some of which particulars I am satisfied his vile agent Joseph Leman could not reveal to his viler employer); his pushing on the marriage day in the name of your uncle; which it could not answer any wicked purpose for him to do; and what he writes of your uncle's proposal, to have it thought that you were married from the time that you had lived in one house together; and that to be made to agree with the time of Mr. Hickman's visit to your uncle; the insisting on a trusty person's being present at the ceremony, at that uncle's nomination—these things make me *assured that he now at last means honourably.*

But if any unexpected delays should happen on his side,

* See Letter LV. of this volume. † Ibid.

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acquaint me, my dear, with the very street where Mrs. Sinclair lives; and where Mrs. Fretchville's house is situated (which I cannot find that you have ever mentioned in your former letters—which is a little odd); and I will make strict inquiries of them, and of Tomlinson too; and I will (if your heart will let you take my advice) soon procure you a refuge from him with Mrs. Townsend.

But why do I now, when you seem to be in so good a train, puzzle and perplex you with my retrospections? And yet they may be of use to you, if any delay happen on his part.

But that I think cannot well be. What you have therefore now to do, is so to behave to this proud-spirited wretch, as may banish from his mind all remembrance of past disobligations,* and to receive his addresses as those of a betrothed lover. You will incur the censure of prudery and affectation, if you keep him at that distance which you have hitherto *kept him at.* His sudden (and as suddenly recovered) illness has given him an opportunity to find out that you love him. [Alas! my dear, I knew you loved him!] He has seemed to change his nature, and is all love and gentleness. *And no more quarrels now, I beseech you.*

I am very angry with him, nevertheless, for the freedoms which he took with your person; † *and I think some guard is necessary, as he is certainly an encroacher. But indeed all men are so; and you are such a charming creature, and have kept him at such a distance!—But no more of this subject. Only, my dear, be not over-nice, now you are so near the state. You see what difficulties you laid yourself under,* when Tomlinson's letter called you again into *the wretch's* company.

If you meet with no impediments, no new causes of doubt,‡ your reputation in the eye of the world is concerned, that you should be his, *and as your uncle rightly judges, be thought to have been his before now.* And yet, *let me tell you,* I *can hardly* bear *to think* that these libertines should be rewarded for their villany with the best of the sex, when the worst of it are too good for them.

* See Letter LV. of this volume.

† See vol. ii. Letter XLVI. ‡ See Letter LV. of this volume.

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I shall send this long letter by Collins,* who changes his day to oblige me. As none of our letters by Wilson's conveyance have miscarried, when you have been in more apparently disagreeable situations than you are in at present, I *have no doubt* that this will go safe.

Miss Lardner† (whom you have seen at her cousin Biddulph's) saw you at St. James's church on Sunday was fortnight. She kept you in her eye during the whole time; but could not once obtain the notice of yours, though she courtesied to you twice. She thought to pay her compliments to you when the service was over; for she doubted not but you were married—and for an odd reason—because you came to church by yourself. Every eye (as usual, wherever you are), she said, was upon you; and this seeming to give you hurry, and you being nearer the door than she, you slid out before she could get to you. But she ordered her servant to follow you till you were housed. This servant saw you step into a chair which waited for you; and you ordered the men to carry you to the place where they took you up. She *describes the house* as a very genteel house, and fit to receive people of fashion: *and what makes me mention this, is, that perhaps you will have a visit from her; or message, at least.*

So that you have Mr. Doleman's testimony to the credit of the house and people you are with; and he is a man of fortune, and some reputation; formerly a rake indeed; but married to a woman of family; and having had a palsy blow, one would think a penitent.‡ You have *also Mr. Mennell's at least passive testimony; Mr.* Tomlinson's; *and now, lastly, Miss Lardner's; so that there will be the less need for inquiry: but you know my busy and inquisitive temper, as well as my affection for you, and my concern for your honour. But all doubt will soon be lost in certainty.*

Nevertheless I must add, that I would have you command me up, if I can be of the least service or pleasure to you.§ I value not fame; I value not censure; nor even life itself, I verily think, as I do your honour, and your friendship—

* See Letter LV. of this volume. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

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For is not your honour my honour? And is not your friendship the pride of my life?

May Heaven preserve you, my dearest creature, in honour and safety, is the prayer, the hourly prayer of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

Thursday Morning, five o'clock.

I have written all night. *Excuse indifferent writing; my crow-quills are worn to the stumps, and I must get a new supply.*

THESE ladies always write with crow-quills, Jack.

If thou art capable of taking in all my *providences,* in this letter, thou wilt admire my sagacity and contrivance almost as much as I do myself. Thou seest that Miss Lardner, Mrs. Sinclair, Tomlinson, Mrs. Fretchville, Mennell, are all mentioned in it. My first liberties with her person also. [Modesty, modesty, Belford, I doubt, is more confined to time, place, and occasion, even by the most delicate minds, than these minds would have it believed to be.] And why all these taken notice of by me from the genuine letter, but for fear some future letter from the vixen should escape my hands, in which she might refer to these names? And if none of them were to have been found in this that is to pass for hers, I might be routed *horse and foot*, as Lord M. would phrase it in a like case.

Devilish hard (and yet I may thank myself) to be put to all this plague and trouble.—And for *what* dost thou ask?—O Jack, for a triumph of more value to me *beforehand* than an imperial crown!—Don't ask me the value of it a *month hence.* But what indeed is an imperial crown itself when a man is used to it?

Miss Howe might well be anxious about the letter she wrote. Her sweet friend, from what I have let pass of hers, has reason to rejoice in the thought that it fell not into my hands.

And now must all my contrivances be set at work, to

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intercept the expected letter from Miss Howe: which is, as I suppose, to direct her to a place of safety, and out of my knowledge. Mrs. Townsend is, no doubt, in this case, to smuggle her off: I hope the *villain*, as I am so frequently called between these two girls, will be able to manage this point.

But what, perhaps, thou askest, if the lady should take it into her head, by the connivance of Miss Rawlins, to quit this house privately in the night?

I have thought of this, Jack. Does not Will. lie in the house? And is not the widow Bevis my fast friend?

—o—

LETTER LXVI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday, six o'clock, June 10.

THE lady gave Will.'s sweetheart a letter last night to be carried to the post-house, as this morning, directed for Miss Howe, under cover to Hickman. I daresay neither cover nor letter will be seen to have been opened. The contents but eight lines.—To own—'The receipt of her 'double-dated letter in safety; and referring to a longer 'letter which she intends to write, when she shall have a 'quieter heart and less trembling fingers. But mentions 'something to have happened [My detecting her, she means], 'which has given her very great flutters, confusions, and 'apprehensions: but which she will wait the issue of [Some 'hopes for me hence, Jack!] before she gives her fresh per-'turbation or concern on her account.—She tells her how 'impatient she shall be for her next,' &c.

Now, Belford, I thought it would be but kind in me to save Miss Howe's concern on these alarming hints; since the curiosity of such a spirit must have been prodigiously excited by them. Having therefore so good a copy to imitate, I wrote; and taking out that of my beloved, put under the same cover the following short billet; inscriptive and conclusive parts of it in her own words.

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Hampstead, Tuesday Evening.

MY EVER DEAR MISS HOWE,—A few lines only, till calmer spirits and quieter fingers be granted me, and till I can get over the shock which your intelligence has given me—to acquaint you—that your kind long letter of Wednesday, and, as I may say, of Thursday morning, is come safe to my hands. On receipt of yours by my messenger to you, I sent for it from Wilson's. There, thank Heaven! it lay. May that Heaven reward you for all your past, and for all your *intended* goodness to

Your for ever obliged

CL. HARLOWE.

I TOOK great pains in writing this. It cannot, I hope, be suspected. Her hand is so *very* delicate. Yet hers is written less beautifully than she usually writes: and I hope Miss Howe will allow somewhat for *hurry of spirits,* and *unsteady fingers.*

My consideration for Miss Howe's *ease of mind* extended still further than to the instance I have mentioned.

That this billet might be with her as soon as possible (and before it could have reached Hickman by the post), I despatched it away by a servant of Mowbray's. Miss Howe, had there been any failure or delay, might, as thou wilt think, have communicated her anxieties to her fugitive friend; and she *to me* perhaps in a way I should not have been pleased with.

Once more wilt thou wonderingly question—All this pains for a single girl?

Yes, Jack.—But is not this girl a CLARISSA?—And who knows but kind fortune, as a reward for my perseverance, may toss me in her charming friend? Less likely things have come to pass, Belford. And to be sure I shall have her, if I resolve upon it.

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LETTER LXVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Eight o'clock, Saturday Morning, June 10.

I AM come back from Mrs. Moore's, whither I went in order to attend my charmer's commands. But no admittance—a very bad night.

Doubtless she must be as much concerned that she has carried her resentments so very far, as I have reason to be that I made such poor use of the opportunity I had on Wednesday night.

But now, Jack, for a brief review of my present situation; and a slight hint or two of my precautions.

I have seen the women this morning, and find them half right, half doubting.

Miss Rawlins's brother tells her that she *lives* at Mrs. Moore's.

Mrs. Moore can do nothing without Miss Rawlins.

People who keep lodgings at public places expect to get by every one who comes into their purlieus. Though not permitted to lodge there myself, I have engaged all the rooms she has to spare, to the very garrets; and *that*, as I have told thee before, for a month certain, and at her own price, board included; my spouse's and all: but she must not at present know it. So I hope I have Mrs. Moore fast *by the interest.*

This, devil-like, is suiting temptations to inclinations.

I have always observed, and, I believe, I have hinted as much formerly,* that all dealers, though but for pins, may be taken in by customers for pins, sooner than by a direct bribe of ten times the value; especially if pretenders to conscience: for the offer of a bribe would not only give room for suspicion, but would startle and alarm their scrupulousness; while a high price paid for what you buy, is but submitting to be cheated in the method the person makes a

* Vol. ii. Letter XLIX.

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profession to get by. Have I not said that human nature is a rogue? *—And do not I know that it is?

To give a higher instance, how many proud senators, in the year 1720, were induced, by presents or subscriptions of South Sea stock, to contribute to a scheme big with national ruin; who yet would have spurned the man who should have presumed to offer them even twice the sum certain that they had a chance to gain by the stock?—But to return to my *review* and to my *precautions*.

Miss Rawlins fluctuates as she hears the lady's story, or as she hears mine. Somewhat of an infidel, I doubt, is this Miss Rawlins. I have not yet considered *her* foible. The next time I see her, I will take particular notice of all the moles and freckles in her mind; and then *infer* and *apply*.

The widow Bevis, as I have told thee, is all my own.

My man Will. lies in the house. My other new fellow attends upon *me*; and cannot therefore be quite stupid.

Already is Will. over head and ears in love with one of Mrs. Moore's maids. He was struck with her the moment he set his eyes upon her. A raw country wench too. But all women, from the countess to the cook-maid, are put into high good humour with themselves when a man is taken with them at first sight. Be they ever so *plain* [no woman can be *ugly*, Jack!], they'll find twenty good reasons, besides the great one *(for sake's sake)*, by the help of the glass without (and perhaps in spite of it) and conceit within, to justify the honest fellow's *caption*.

"The rogue has saved £150 in my service."—More by 50 than I bid him save. No doubt, he thinks he *might* have done so; though I believe not worth a groat. "The best "of masters I—passionate, indeed; but soon appeased."

The wench is extremely kind to him already. The other maid is also very civil to him. He has a husband for *her* in his eye. She cannot but say that Mr. Andrew, my *other* servant [the girl is for fixing the *person*], is a very well spoken, civil young man.

"We common folks have our joys, and please your

* Vol. ii. Letter L., and Letter I. of this volume.

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" honour, says honest Joseph Leman, like as our betters " have." * And true says honest Joseph—did I prefer ease to difficulty, I should envy these low-born sinners some of their joys.

But if Will. had *not* made amorous pretensions to the wenches, we all know that servants, united in one *common compare-note cause*, are intimate the moment they see one another—great genealogists too; they know immediately the whole kin and kin's kin of each other, though dispersed over the three kingdoms, as well as the genealogies and kin's kin of those whom they serve.

But my precautions end not here.

O Jack, with such an invention, what occasion had I to carry my beloved to Mrs. Sinclair's?

My spouse may have *farther* occasion for the messengers whom she despatched, one to Miss Howe, the other to Wilson's. With one of these Will. is already well acquainted, as thou hast heard—to mingle liquor is to mingle souls with these fellows; with the other messenger he will soon be acquainted, if he be not already.

The Captain's servant has *his* uses and instructions assigned him. I have hinted at some of them already.† *He* also serves a most humane and considerate master. I love to make everybody respected to my power.

The post, general and penny, will be strictly watched likewise.

Miss Howe's Collins is remembered to be described. Miss Howe's and Hickman's liveries also.

James Harlowe and Singleton are warned against. I am to be acquainted with any inquiry that shall happen to be made after my spouse, whether by her married or maiden name, before *she* shall be told of it—and this that I may have it in my power to *prevent mischief*.

I have ordered Mowbray and Tourville (and Belton, if his health permit) to take their quarters at Hampstead for a week, with their fellows to attend them. I spare thee for the

* Vol. ii. Letter LXII.

† See Letter LXIV. of this volume.

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present, because of thy private concerns. But hold thyself in cheerful readiness, however, as a mark of thy *allegiance.*

As to my spouse herself, has she not reason to be pleased with me for having permitted her to receive Miss Howe's letter from Wilson's? A plain case, either that I am no deep plotter, or that I have no farther views than to make my peace with her for an offence so slight and so *accidental.*

Miss Howe says, though prefaced with an *alas!* that her charming friend loves me: she must therefore yearn after this reconciliation—prospects so fair—if she used me with less rigour, and more politeness; if she showed me any *compassion;* seemed inclinable to spare me, and to make the most favourable construction: I cannot but say that it would be impossible not to show *her* some. But to be insulted and defied by a rebel in one's power, what prince can bear that?

But I return to the scene of action. I must keep the women steady. I had no opportunity to talk to my worthy Mrs. Bevis in private.

Tomlinson, a dog, not come yet!

—o—

LETTER LXVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

From my Apartments at Mrs. Moore's.

Miss Rawlins at her brother's; Mrs. Moore engaged in household matters; widow Bevis dressing; I have nothing to do but write. This cursed Tomlinson not yet arrived!—Nothing to be done without him.

I think he shall complain in pretty high language of the treatment he met with yesterday. What are our affairs 'to him? He can have no view but to serve us. Cruel to 'send back to town, *un-audienced,* unseen, a man of his 'business and importance. He never stirs a foot, but some-'thing of consequence depends upon his movements. A 'confounded thing to trifle thus humorsomely with such a

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'gentleman's movements!—These women think that all the 'business of the world must stand still for their *figaries* [a 'good female word, Jack!], the greatest triflers in the crea- 'tion, to fancy themselves the most important beings in it '—*marry come up!* as I have heard goody Sorlings say to 'her servants, when she has rated at them with mingled 'anger and disdain.'

After all, methinks I want those *tostications* [thou seest how women, and women's words, fill my mind] to be over, *happily* over, that I may sit down quietly and reflect upon the dangers I have passed through, and the troubles I have undergone. I have a *reflecting* mind, as thou knowest; but the very word *reflecting* implies *all got over*.

What briars and thorns does the wretch rush into (a scratched face and tattered garments the unavoidable consequence) who will needs be for striking out a new path through overgrown underwood; quitting *that* beaten out for him by those who have travelled the same road before him!

A VISIT from the widow Bevis, in my own apartment. She tells me that my spouse had thoughts last night, after I was gone to my lodgings, of removing from Mrs Moore's.

I almost wish she had attempted to do so.

Miss Rawlins, it seems, who was applied to upon it, dissuaded her from it.

Mrs. Moore also, though she did not own that Will. lay in the house (or rather set up in it, courting), set before her the difficulties, which, in her opinion, she would have to get clear off, without my knowledge; assuring her, that she could be nowhere more safe than with her, till she had fixed whither to go. And the lady herself recollected that if she went, she might miss the expected letter from her dear friend Miss Howe! which, as she owned, was to direct her future steps.

She must also surely have some curiosity to know what her uncle's friend had to say to her from her uncle, contemptuously as she yesterday treated a man of his importance. Nor could she, I should think, be absolutely determined to

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put herself out of the way of receiving the visits of two of the principal ladies of my family, and to break entirely with me in the face of them all.—Besides, whither could she have gone?—Moreover, Miss Howe's letter coming (after her elopement) so safely to her hands, must surely put her into a more confiding temper with me, and with every one else, though she would not immediately own it.

But these good folks have so *little* charity!—Are such *severe* censurers!—Yet who is *absolutely perfect?*—It were to be wished, however, that *they would* be so modest as to doubt themselves sometimes: then would they allow for others, as others (excellent as they imagine themselves to be) must for them.

—o—

Saturday, one o'clock.

TOMLINSON at last is come. Forced to ride five miles about (though I shall impute his delay to great and important business) to avoid the sight of two or three impertinent rascals, who, little thinking whose affairs he was employed in, wanted to obtrude themselves upon him. I think I will make this fellow easy, if he behave to my liking in this affair.

I sent up the moment he came.

She desired to be excused receiving his visit till four this afternoon.

Intolerable!—No consideration!—None at all in this sex, when their cursed humours are in the way!—Pay-day, pay-*hour* rather, will come!—Oh! that it were to be the next!

The Captain is in a pet. Who can blame him? Even the women think a man of his consequence, and generously coming to serve *us*, hardly used. Would to Heaven she had attempted to get off last night! The women not my enemies, who knows but the husband's exerted authority might have met with such connivance as might have concluded either in carrying her back to her former lodgings, or in consummation at Mrs. Moore's in spite of exclamations, fits, and the rest of the female obsecrations?

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My beloved has not appeared to anybody this day, except to Mrs. Moore. Is, it seems, extremely low: unfit for the interesting conversation that is to be held in the afternoon. Longs to hear from her dear friend Miss Howe—yet cannot expect a letter for a day or two. Has a bad opinion of all mankind.—No wonder!—Excellent creature as she is! with such a *father,* such *uncles,* such a *brother,* as she has!

How does she look?

Better than could be expected from yesterday's fatigue, and last night's ill rest.

These tender doves know not, till put to it, what they can bear; especially when engaged in love affairs; and their attention wholly engrossed. But the sex love busy scenes. Still life is their aversion. A woman will *create* a storm, rather than be without one. So that they can preside in the whirlwind, and direct it, they are happy.—But my beloved's misfortune is, that she must live in tumults; yet neither raise them herself, nor be able to control them.

—o—

LETTER LXIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday Night, June 10.

WHAT will be the issue of all my plots and contrivances, devil take me if I am able to divine. But I will not, as Lord M. would say, *forestall my own market.*

At four, the appointed hour, I sent up to desire admittance in the Captain's name and my own.

She would wait upon the *Captain* presently [not upon *me!*]; and in the parlour, if it were not engaged.

The dining-room being *mine,* perhaps that was the reason of her naming the parlour—mighty nice again, if so! No good sign for me, thought I, this stiff punctilio.

In the parlour, with me and the Captain, were Mrs. Moore, Miss Rawlins, and Mrs. Bevis.

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The women said they would withdraw when the lady came down.

Lovel. Not except she chooses you should, ladies.—People who are so much above-board as I am, need not make secrets of any of their affairs. Besides, you three ladies are now acquainted with all our concerns.

Capt. I have some things to say to your lady, that perhaps she would not herself choose that anybody should hear; not even *you*, Mr. Lovelace, as you and her family are not upon such a good foot of understanding as were to be wished.

Lovel. Well, well, Captain, I must submit. Give us a sign to withdraw, and we will withdraw.

It was better that the exclusion of the women should come from him, than from me.

Capt. I will bow, and wave my hand, thus—when I wish to be alone with the lady. Her uncle dotes upon her. I hope, Mr. Lovelace, you will not make a reconciliation more difficult, for the earnestness which my dear friend shows to bring it to bear. But indeed I must tell you, *as I told you more than once before,* that I am afraid you have made lighter of the occasion of this misunderstanding to me, than it ought to have been made.

Lovel. I hope, Captain Tomlinson, you do not question my veracity!

Capt. I beg your pardon, Mr. Lovelace—but those things which we men may think lightly of, may not be light to a woman of delicacy.—And then, if you *have* bound yourself by a vow, you ought——

Miss Rawlins bridling, her lips closed (but her mouth stretched to a smile of approbation, the longer for not buttoning), tacitly showed herself pleased with the Captain for his delicacy.

Mrs. Moore *could* speak—*Very true,* however, was all she said, with a motion of her head that expressed the bow-approbatory.

For my part, said the jolly widow, staring with eyes as big as eggs, I know what I know.—But man and wife *are*

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man and wife; or they are *not* man and wife.—I have no notion of standing upon such niceties.

But here she comes! cried one, hearing her chamber door open—Here she comes! another, hearing it shut after her—and down dropt the angel among us.

We all stood up, bowing and courtesying, and could not help it; for she entered with such an air as commanded all our reverence. Yet the Captain looked plaguy grave.

Cl. Pray keep your seats, ladies—Pray do not go [for they made offers to withdraw; yet Miss Rawlins would have burst had she been suffered to retire]. Before this time you have heard all my story, I make no doubt—pray keep your seats—at least all Mr. Lovelace's.

A very saucy and whimsical beginning, thought I.

Captain Tomlinson, your servant, addressing herself to him with inimitable dignity. I hope you did not take amiss my declining your visit yesterday. I was really incapable of talking upon any subject that required attention.

Capt. I am glad to see you better now, Madam. I hope I do.

Cl. Indeed I am not well. I would not have excused myself from attending you some hours ago, but in hopes I should have been better. I beg your pardon, sir, for the trouble I have given you; and shall the rather expect it, as *this day will,* I hope, *conclude it all.*

Thus set; thus determined; thought I,—yet to have *slept* upon it!—But as what she said was capable of a good, as well as a bad construction, I would not put an unfavourable one upon it.

Lovel. The Captain was sorry, my dear, he did not offer his attendance the moment he arrived yesterday. He was afraid that you took it amiss that he did not.

Cl. Perhaps I thought that my *uncle's* friend might have wished to see me as soon as he came [how we stared!]—But, sir [to me], it might be *convenient to you* to detain him.

The devil, thought I!—So there really was resentment as well as headache, as my good friend Mrs. Bevis observed, in her refusing to see the *honest* gentleman.

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Capt. You *would* detain me, Mr. Lovelace—I was for paying my respects to the lady the moment I came——

Cl. Well, sir [interrupting him], to wave this; for I would not be thought captious—if you have not suffered inconvenience, in being obliged to come again, I shall be easy.

Capt. [Half disconcerted.] A *little* inconvenience, I can't say but I have suffered. I have, indeed, too many affairs upon my hands; but the desire I have to serve you and Mr. Lovelace, as well as to oblige my dear friend, your uncle Harlowe, make great inconveniences but small ones.

Cl. You are very obliging, sir.—Here is a great alteration since you parted with us last.

Capt. A great one indeed, Madam! I was very much surprised at it, on Thursday evening, when Mr. Lovelace conducted me to your lodgings, where we hoped to find you.

Cl. Have you anything to say to me, sir, from my uncle himself, that requires my *private* ear!—Don't go, ladies [for the women stood up, and offered to withdraw],—if Mr. Lovelace stays, I am sure *you* may.

I frowned—I bit my lip—I looked at the women—and shook my head.

Capt. I have nothing to offer but what Mr. Lovelace is a party to, and may hear, except one private word or two, which may be postponed to the last.

Cl. Pray, ladies, keep your seats.—Things are altered, sir, since I saw you. You can mention nothing that relates to *me* now, to which *that gentleman* can be a party.

Capt. You surprise me, Madam! I am sorry to hear this!—Sorry for your *uncle's* sake!—Sorry for *your* sake!—Sorry for Mr. *Lovelace's* sake!—And yet I am sure he must have given greater occasion than he has mentioned to me, or——

Lovel. Indeed, Captain,—indeed, ladies, I have told you great part of my story!—And what I told you of my offence was the truth:—what I concealed of my story was only what I apprehended would, if known, cause this dear creature to be thought more censorious than charitable.

Cl. Well, well, sir, say what you please. Make me as

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black as you please—make yourself as white as you can—I am not now in your power: that consideration will comfort me for all.

Capt. God forbid that I should offer to plead in behalf of a crime that a woman of virtue and honour cannot forgive? But surely, surely, Madam, this is going too far.

Cl. Do not blame me, Captain Tomlinson. I have a good opinion of you as my *uncle's* friend; but if you are Mr. *Lovelace's* friend, that is another thing; for my interest and Mr. Lovelace's must now be for ever separated.

Capt. One word with you, Madam, if you please—offering to retire.

Cl. You may say all that you please to say before these gentlewomen—Mr. Lovelace may have secrets—I have none:—you seem to think me faulty: I should be glad that all the world knew my heart. Let my enemies sit in judgment upon my actions; fairly scanned, I fear not the result; let them even ask me my most secret thoughts, and whether they make for me, or against me, I will reveal them.

Capt. Noble lady! who can say as you say?

The women held up their hands and eyes; each as if she had said,—Not I.

No disorder here! said Miss Rawlins:—but (judging by her own heart) a confounded deal of improbability, I believe she thought..

Finely *said,* to be sure, said the widow Bevis, shrugging her shoulders.

Mrs. Moore sighed.

Jack Belford, thought I, knows all mine; and in this I am more ingenuous than any of the three, and a fit match for this paragon.

Cl. How Mr. Lovelace has found me out here I cannot tell: but such mean devices, such artful, such worse than Waltham disguises put on, to obtrude himself into my company; such bold, such shocking untruths——

Capt. The favour of but one word, Madam, in private——

Cl. In order to support a right which he has not over me!—Oh, sir!—O Captain Tomlinson!—I think I have

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reason to say that the man (there he stands!) is capable of any vileness!

The women looked upon one another, and upon me, by turns, to see how I bore it. I had such dartings in my head at the instant, that I thought I should have gone distracted. My brain seemed on fire. What would I have given to have had her alone with me!—I traversed the room; my clenched fist to my forehead. Oh, that I had anybody here, thought I, that Hercules-like, when flaming in the tortures of Dejanira's poisoned shirt, I could tear in pieces!

Capt. Dear lady! see you not how the poor gentleman—Lord, how have I imposed upon your uncle, at this rate! How happy did I tell him I saw you! How happy I was sure you would be in each other!

Cl. Oh, sir, you don't know how many premeditated offences I *had forgiven* when I saw you last, before I could appear to you what I hoped then I might for the future be!—But now you may tell my uncle, if you please, that I cannot hope for his mediation. Tell him that my guilt, in giving this man an opportunity to spirit me away from my *tried,* my *experienced,* my *natural* friends (harshly as they treated me), stares me every day more and more in the face; and still the more, as my fate seems to be drawing to a crisis, according to the malediction of my offended father!

And then she burst into tears, which even affected that dog, who, brought to abet me, was himself all *Belforded* over.

The women, so used to cry without grief, as they are to laugh without reason, by mere force of example [confound their promptitudes] must needs pull out *their* handkerchiefs. The less wonder, however, as I myself, between confusion, surprise, and concern, could hardly stand it.

What's a tender heart good for?—Who can be happy that has a *feeling* heart?—And yet, thou'lt say, that he who has it not, must be a tiger, and no man.

Capt. Let me beg the favour of one word with you, Madam, in private; and that on my *own* account.

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The women hereupon offered to retire. She insisted that if *they* went, *I* should not stay.

Capt. Sir, bowing to me, shall I beg——

I hope, thought I, that I may trust this solemn dog, instructed as he is. She does not doubt him. I'll stay out no longer than to give her time to spend her first fire.

I then passively withdrew with the women.—But with such a bow to my goddess, that it won for me every heart but that I wanted *most* to win; for the haughty maid bent not her knee in return.

The conversation between the Captain and the lady, when we were retired, was to the following effect:—They both talked loud enough for me to hear them—the lady from anger, the Captain with design; and thou mayest be sure there was no listener but myself. What I was imperfect in was supplied afterwards; for I had my vellum-leaved book to note all down. If she had known this, perhaps she would have been more sparing of her invectives —and but *perhaps* neither.

He told her that as her brother was absolutely resolved to see her; and as he himself, in compliance with her uncle's expedient, had reported her marriage; and as that report had reached the ears of Lord M., Lady Betty, and the rest of my relations; and as he had been obliged, in consequence of his first report, to vouch it; and as her brother might find out where she was, and apply to the women here for a confirmation or refutation of the marriage; he had thought himself obliged to countenance the report before the women. That this had embarrassed him not a little, as he would not for the world that she should have cause to think him capable of prevarication, contrivance, or double dealing; and that this made him desirous of a private conversation with her.

It was true, she said, she *had* given her consent to such an expedient, believing it was her *uncle's;* and little thinking that it would lead to so many errors. Yet she might have known that one error is frequently the parent of many. Mr. Lovelace had made her sensible of the truth of that

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observation, on more occasions than one; and it was an observation that he, the Captain, had made in one of the letters that was shown her yesterday.*

He hoped that she had no mistrust of him: that she had no doubt of his honour. If, Madam, you suspect me—if you think me capable—what a man!—the Lord be merciful to me!—What a man must you think me!

I hope, sir, there cannot be a man in the world who could deserve to be suspected in such a case as this. I do *not* suspect you. If it were possible there could be *one* such man, I am sure Captain Tomlinson, a father of children, a man in years, of sense and experience, cannot be that man.

He told me, that just then he thought he felt a sudden flash from her eye, an *eye-beam* as he called it, dart through his shivering reins; and he could not help trembling.

The dog's conscience, Jack!—Nothing else!—I have felt half a dozen such flashes, such eye-beams, in as many different conversations with this soul-piercing beauty.

Her uncle, she must own, was not accustomed to think of such expedients; but she had reconciled this to herself, as the case was unhappily uncommon; and by the regard he had for her honour.

This set the puppy's heart at ease, and gave him more courage.

She asked him if he thought Lady Betty and Miss Montague intended her a visit?

He had no doubt but they did.

And does he imagine, said she, that I could be brought to countenance to them the report you have given out?

[*I had hoped to bring her to this, Jack, or she had seen their letters.* But I had told the Captain that I believed I must give up this expectation.]

No.—He believed that I had not such a thought. He was pretty sure that I intended, when I saw *them*, to tell them (as in confidence) the naked truth.

He then told her that her uncle had already made some steps towards a general reconciliation. The moment, Madam,

* See Letter LIX. of this volume.

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that he knows you are really married, he will enter into conference with your *father* upon it; having actually expressed to your *mother* his desire to be reconciled to you.

And what, sir, said my mother? What said my *dear* mother?

With great emotion she asked this question; holding out her sweet face, as the Captain described her, with the most earnest attention, as if she would shorten the way which his words were to have to her heart.

Your mother, Madam, burst into tears upon it: and your uncle was so penetrated by *her* tenderness, that he could not proceed with the subject. But he intends to enter upon it with her in form, as soon as he hears that the ceremony is over.

By the tone of her voice she wept. The dear creature, thought I, begins to relent!—And I grudged the dog his eloquence. I could hardly bear the thought that any man breathing should have the power which I had lost, of persuading this high-souled woman, though in my own favour. And wouldest thou think it? this reflection gave me more uneasiness at the moment than I felt from her reproaches, violent as they were; or than I had pleasure in her supposed relenting: for there is beauty in everything she says and does!—Beauty in her passion!—Beauty in her tears!—Had the Captain been a young fellow, and of rank and fortune, *his* throat would have been in danger; and I should have thought very hardly of *her*.

O Captain Tomlinson, said she, you know not what I have suffered by this man's strange ways! He had, as I was not ashamed to tell him yesterday, a *plain path before him*. He at first betrayed me into his power—but when I *was* in it—there she stopt.—Then resuming—Oh, sir, you know not what a strange man he has been!—An unpolite, a rough-mannered man! In disgrace of his birth, and education, and knowledge, an unpolite man!—And so acting, as if his worldly and personal advantages set him above those graces which distinguish a gentleman.

The first woman that ever said, or that ever thought so

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of me, that's my comfort, thought I!—But this (spoken to her *uncle's friend*, behind my back) helps to heap up thy already too full measure, dearest!—It is down in my vellum book.

Cl. When I look back on his whole behaviour to a poor young creature (for I am but a *very* young creature), I cannot acquit him either of great folly or of deep design. And last Wednesday—there she stopt; and I suppose turned away her face.

I wonder she was not ashamed to hint at what she thought so shameful; and that to a *man*, and *alone* with him.

Capt. Far be it from me, Madam, to offer to enter too closely into so tender a subject. Mr. Lovelace owns that you have reason to be displeased with him. But he solemnly clears himself to me of *premeditated* offence——

Cl. He cannot clear himself, Captain Tomlinson. The people of the house must be very vile, as well as he. I am convinced that there was a wicked confederacy—but no more upon such a subject.

Capt. Only one word more, Madam.—He tells me that you promised to pardon him. He tells me——

He knew, interrupted she, that he deserved not pardon, or he had not extorted that promise from me. Nor had I given it to him, but to shield myself from the vilest outrage——

Capt. I could wish, Madam, inexcusable as his behaviour has been, since he has *something* to plead in the reliance he made upon your *promise*, that for the sake of appearances to the world, and to avoid the mischiefs that may follow if you absolutely break with him, you could prevail upon your naturally generous mind to lay an obligation upon him by your forgiveness.

She was silent.

Capt. Your father and mother, Madam, deplore a daughter lost to them, whom your generosity to Mr. Lovelace may restore: do not put it to the possible chance that they may have cause to deplore a double loss; the losing of a *son*, as well as a *daughter*, who, by his own violence, which you may perhaps prevent, may be for ever lost to them, and to the whole family.

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She paused—she wept—she owned that she felt the force of this argument.

I will be the making of this fellow, thought I.

Capt. Permit me, Madam, to tell you that I do not think it would be difficult to prevail upon your uncle, if you insist upon it, to come up privately to town, and to give you with his own hand to Mr. Lovelace—except, indeed, your present misunderstanding were to come to his ears. Besides, Madam, your brother, it is likely, may at this very time be in town; and he is resolved to find you out——

Cl. Why, sir, should I be so much afraid of my *brother?* My brother has injured *me*, not I *him*. Will my brother offer to me what Mr. Lovelace has offered?—Wicked, ungrateful man! to insult a friendless, unprotected creature, made friendless by himself!—I cannot, cannot think of him in the light I once thought of him. What, sir, to put myself into the power of a wretch, who has acted by me with so much vile premeditation! Who shall pity, who shall excuse me, if I do, were I to suffer ever so much from him? —No, sir.—Let Mr. Lovelace leave me—let my brother find me. I am not such a poor creature as to be afraid to face the brother who has injured me.

Capt. Were you and your brother to meet only to confer together, to expostulate, to clear up difficulties, it were another thing. But what, Madam, can you think will be the issue of an interview (Mr. Solmes with him), when he finds you *unmarried*, and resolved never to have Mr. Lovelace; supposing Mr. Lovelace were *not* to interfere, which cannot be imagined?

Cl. Well, sir, I can only say I am a very unhappy creature!—I must resign to the will of Providence, and be patient under evils, which *that* will not permit me to shun. But I have taken my measures. Mr. Lovelace can never make *me* happy, nor I *him*. I wait here only for a letter from Miss Howe—that must determine me——

Determine you as to Mr. Lovelace, Madam? interrupted the Captain.

Cl. I am already determined as to him.

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Capt. If it be not in his favour, I have done. I cannot use stronger arguments than I have used, and it would be impertinent to repeat them. If you cannot forgive his offence, I am sure it must have been much greater than he has owned to me. If you are absolutely determined, be pleased to let me know what I shall say to your uncle? You were pleased to tell me *that this day would put an end to what you called my trouble:* I should not have thought it any, could I have been a humble mean of reconciling persons of worth and honour to each other.

Here I entered with a solemn air.

Lovel. Captain Tomlinson, I have heard a part of what has passed between you and this unforgiving (however otherwise excellent) lady. I am cut to the heart to find the dear creature so determined. I could not have believed it possible, with such prospects, that I had so little share in her esteem. Nevertheless I must do myself justice with regard to the offence I was so unhappy as to give, since I find you are ready to think it much greater than it really was.

Cl. I hear not, sir, your recapitulations. I am, and ought to be, the sole judge of insults offered to my person. I enter not into discussion with you, nor hear you on the shocking subject. And was going.

I put myself between her and the door—You *may* hear all I have to say, Madam. My *fault* is not of such a nature but that you *may*. I will be a just accuser of myself; and will not wound your ears.

I then protested that the fire was a real fire. [So it was.] I disclaimed [less truly indeed] premeditation. I owned that I was hurried on by the violence of a youthful passion, and by a sudden impulse, which few other persons, in the like situation, would have been able to check: that I withdrew, at her command and entreaty, on the promise of pardon, without having offered the least indecency, or any freedom that would not have been forgiven by persons of delicacy, surprised in an attitude so charming—her terror, on the alarm of fire, calling for a soothing behaviour and personal tenderness, she being ready to fall into fits: my hoped-for happy day so near, that

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I might be presumed to be looked upon as a betrothed lover —and that this excuse might be pleaded *even for the women of the house*, that they, thinking us actually married, might suppose themselves to be the less concerned to interfere on so tender an occasion.—[There, Jack, was a bold insinuation on behalf of the women!]

High indignation filled her disdainful eye, eye-beam after eye-beam flashing at me. Every feature of her sweet face had soul in it. Yet she spoke not. Perhaps, Jack, she had a thought, that this *plea for the women* accounted for my contrivance to have her pass to them as married, when I *first carried her thither*.

Capt. Indeed, sir, I must say that you did not well to add to the apprehensions of a lady so much terrified before.

The dear creature offered to go by me. I set my back against the door, and besought her to stay a few moments. I had not said thus much, my dearest creature, but for *your* sake, as well as for *my own*, that Captain Tomlinson should not think I had been viler than I was. Nor will I say one word more on the subject, after I have appealed to your own heart, whether it was not necessary that I should *say so much;* and to the Captain, whether otherwise he would not have gone away with a much worse opinion of me, if he had judged of my offence by the violence of your resentment.

Capt. Indeed I *should*. I *own* I should. And I am very glad, Mr. Lovelace, that you are able to defend yourself thus far.

Cl. That cause must be well tried, where the offender takes his seat upon the same bench with the judge.—I submit not mine to men—nor, give me leave to say, to you, Captain Tomlinson, though I am willing to have a good opinion of you. Had not the man been assured that he had influenced you in his favour, he would not have brought you up to Hampstead.

Capt. That I am *influenced*, as you call it, Madam, is for the sake of your uncle, and for your own sake, more (I will say to Mr. Lovelace's face) than for his. What can I have in view but peace and reconciliation? I have, from the *first*, blamed, and I now, *again*, blame Mr. Lovelace, for adding distress to

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distress, and terror to terror; the lady, as you acknowledge, sir [*looking valiantly*], ready *before* to fall into fits.

Lovel. Let me own to you, Captain Tomlinson, that I have been a very faulty, a very foolish man; and if this dear creature *ever* honoured me with her love, an *ungrateful* one. But I have had too much reason to doubt it. And this is now a flagrant proof that she never had the value for me which my proud heart wished for; that with such prospects before us; a day so near; settlements approved and drawn; her uncle meditating a general reconciliation which, for *her* sake, not *my own*, I was desirous to give in to; she can, for an offence so *really* slight, on an occasion so truly accidental, renounce me for ever; and, with me, all hopes of that reconciliation in the way her uncle had put it in, and she had acquiesced with; and risk all consequences, *fatal ones* as they may too possibly be.—By my soul, Captain Tomlinson, the dear creature must have hated me all the time she was intending to honour me with her hand. And now she must resolve to abandon me, as far as I know, with a preference in her heart of the most odious of men—in favour of *that Solmes*, who, as you tell me, accompanies her brother: and with what hopes, with what view, accompanies him!—How can I bear to think of this?

Cl. It is fit, sir, that you should judge of my regard for you by your own consciousness of demerit. Yet you know, or you would not have dared to behave to me as sometimes you did, that you had *more of it* than you deserved.

She walked from us; and then returning, Captain Tomlinson, said she, I will own to you, that I was not *capable* of resolving to give my *hand*, and—*nothing but my hand.* Have I not given a flagrant proof of this to the once most indulgent of parents? which has brought me into a distress which this man has heightened, when he ought, in gratitude and honour, to have endeavoured to render it supportable. I had even a *bias*, sir, in his favour, I scruple not to own it. Long (much too long!) bore I with his unaccountable ways, attributing his errors to *unmeaning gaiety*, and to a want of knowing what *true delicacy*, and *true generosity*, required from a heart susceptible of grateful impressions to one involved by his

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means in unhappy circumstances. It is now *wickedness* in him (a wickedness which discredits all his *professions*) to say, that this last cruel and ungrateful insult was not a *premeditated* one—But what need I say more of this insult, when it was of such a nature, that it has changed that bias in his favour, and make me choose to forego all the inviting prospects he talks of, and to run all hazards, to free myself from his power?

Oh, my dearest creature! how happy for us both, had I been able to *discover that bias*, as you condescend to call it, through such reserves as man never encountered with!

He *did* discover it, Captain Tomlinson. He brought me, *more than once, to own it;* the more needlessly brought me to own it, as I daresay his own *vanity* gave him *no cause to doubt it;* and as I had apparently no other motive in not being *forward* to own it, than my too justly founded apprehensions of his *want of generosity*. In a word, Captain Tomlinson (and now that I am determined upon my measures, I the less scruple to say), I should have despised myself, had I found myself capable of affectation or tyranny to the man I intended to marry. I have always blamed the dearest friend I have in the world for a fault of this nature. In a word——

Lovel. And had my angel really and indeed the favour for me she is pleased to own?—Dearest creature, forgive me. Restore me to your good opinion. Surely I have not sinned beyond forgiveness. You say that I extorted from you the promise you made me. But I could not have presumed to make that promise the condition of my obedience, had I not thought there *was room to expect* forgiveness. Permit, I beseech you, the prospects to take place that were opening so agreeably before us. I will go to town, and bring the license. All difficulties to the obtaining of it are surmounted. Captain Tomlinson shall be witness to the deeds. He will be present at the ceremony on the part of your uncle. Indeed he gave me hope that your uncle himself——

Capt. I *did*, Mr. Lovelace: and I will tell you my grounds for the hope I gave. I promised to my dear friend (your uncle, Madam), that he should give out that he would take

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a turn with me to my little farmhouse, as I call it, near Northampton, for a week or so.—Poor gentleman! he has of late been very little abroad!—Too visibly declining!—Change of air, it might be given out, was good for him.—But I see, Madam, that this is too *tender* a subject——

The dear creature wept. She knew how to apply as meant the Captain's hint to the *occasion* of her uncle's declining state of health.

Capt. We might indeed, I told him, set out in that road, but turn short to town in *my* chariot; and he might see the ceremony performed with his own eyes, and be the desired father, as well as the beloved uncle.

She turned from us, and wiped her eyes.

Capt. And, really, there seems now to be but two objections to this, as Mr. Harlowe discouraged not the proposal—The one, the unhappy misunderstanding between you; which I would not by any means he should know; since then he might be apt to give weight to Mr. James Harlowe's unjust surmises.—The other, that it would necessarily occasion some delay to the ceremony; which certainly may be performed in a day or two—if——

And then he reverently bowed to my goddess.—Charming fellow!—But often did I curse my stars, for making me so much obliged to his adroitness.

She was going to speak; but not liking the turn of her countenance (although, as I thought, its severity and indignation seemed a little abated) I said, and had like to have blown myself up by it—one expedient I have just thought of——

Cl. None of your *expedients*, Mr. Lovelace!—I abhor your *expedients*, your *inventions*—I have had too many of them.

Lovel. See, Captain Tomlinson!—See, sir!—Oh, how we expose ourselves to you!—Little did you think, I daresay, that we have lived in such a continued misunderstanding together!—But you will make the best of it all. We may yet be happy. Oh! that I could have been assured that this dear creature loved *me* with the hundredth part of the love I have for *her!*—Our diffidences have been mutual. I pre-

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sume to say that she has too much punctilio: I am afraid that I have too little. Hence our difficulties. But I have a heart, Captain Tomlinson, a heart that bids me hope for her love, because it is resolved to deserve it as much as man *can* deserve it.

Capt. I am indeed surprised at what I have seen and heard. I defend not Mr. Lovelace, Madam, in the offence he has given you—as a father of daughters myself, I *cannot* defend him; though his fault seems to be lighter than I had apprehended—but in my conscience, Madam, I think you carry your resentment too high.

Cl. Too high, sir!—Too high to the man that might have been happy if he would! Too high to the man that has held *my soul in suspense* a hundred times, since (by artifice and deceit) he obtained a power over me!—Say, Lovelace, thyself say, art thou not the *very* Lovelace, who by insulting *me,* hast wronged thine *own hopes?*—The wretch that appeared in vile disguises, personating an old, lame creature, seeking for lodgings for thy sick wife?—Telling the gentlewomen here stories all of thine own invention; and asserting to them a husband's right over me, which thou hast not!—And is it [turning to the Captain] to be expected that I should give credit to the protestations of *such a man?*

Lovel. Treat me, dearest creature, as you please, I will bear it: and yet your scorn and your violence have fixed daggers in my heart.—But was it possible, without those disguises, to come at your speech?—And could I lose you, if study, if invention, would put it in my power to arrest your anger, and give me hope to engage you to confirm to me the *promised pardon?* The address I made to you before the women, as if the marriage ceremony had passed, was in consequence of what your uncle *had advised,* and what *you had acquiesced with;* and the rather made, as your brother, and Singleton, and Solmes, were resolved to find out whether what was reported of your marriage were true or not, that they might take their measures accordingly; and in hopes to prevent that mischief, which I have been but *too* studious

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to prevent, since this tameness has but invited insolence from your brother and his confederates.

Cl. Oh, thou strange wretch, how thou talkest!—But, Captain Tomlinson, give me leave to say, that were I inclined to enter further upon this subject, I would appeal to Miss Rawlins's judgment (whom else have I to appeal to?). She seems to be a person of prudence and honour; but not to any *man's* judgment, whether I carry my resentment beyond fit bounds, when I resolve——

Capt. Forgive, Madam, the interruption—but I think there can be no reason for this. You ought, as you said, to be the *sole judge* of indignities offered you. The gentlewomen here are strangers to you. You will perhaps stay but a little while among them. If you lay the state of your case before any of them, and your brother come to inquire of them, your uncle's intended mediation will be discovered, and rendered abortive—*I* shall appear in a light that I never appeared in, in my life—for these women may not think themselves obliged to keep the secret.

Charming fellow!

Cl. Oh what difficulties has one fatal step involved me in—but there is no necessity for such an appeal to anybody. I am resolved on my measures.

Capt. Absolutely resolved, Madam?

Cl. I am.

Capt. What shall I say to your uncle Harlowe, Madam?—Poor gentleman! how will he be surprised!—You see, Mr. Lovelace—you see, sir,—turning to me with a flourishing hand—but you may *thank yourself*—and admirably stalked he from us.

True by my soul, thought I. I traversed the room, and bit my unpersuasive lips, now upper, now under, for vexation.

He made a profound reverence to her—and went to the window, where lay his hat and whip; and, taking them up, opened the door. Child, said he, to somebody he saw, pray order my servant to bring my horse to the door——

Lovel. You won't go, sir—I hope you won't!—I am the unhappiest man in the world!—You won't go—yet,

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alas!—But you won't go, sir!—there may be yet hopes that Lady Betty may have some weight——

Capt. Dear Mr. Lovelace! and may not my worthy friend, and affectionate uncle, hope for *some* influence upon his *daughter-niece?*—But I beg pardon—a letter will always find me disposed to serve the lady, and that as well for her sake as for the sake of my dear friend.

She had thrown herself into her chair: her eyes cast down; she was motionless, as in a profound study.

The Captain bowed to her again: but met with no return to his bow. *Mr. Lovelace,* said he (with an air of equality and independence), *I am yours.*

Still the dear unaccountable sat as immovable as a statue; stirring neither hand, foot, head, nor eye—I never before saw any one in so profound a reverie in so waking a dream.

He passed by her to go out at the door she sat near, though the passage by the other door was his direct way; and bowed again. She moved not. I will not disturb the lady in her meditation, sir.—Adieu, Mr. Lovelace—*no farther, I beseech you.*

She started, sighing—Are you going, sir?

Capt. I am, Madam. I could have been glad to do you service; but I see it is not in my power.

She stood up, holding out one hand, with inimitable dignity and sweetness—I am sorry you are going, sir!—can't help it—I have no friend to advise with—Mr. Lovelace has the art (or good fortune, perhaps I should call it) to make himself many.—Well, sir—if you will go, I can't help it.

Capt. I will *not* go, Madam; his eyes twinkling. [Again seized with a fit of humanity!] I will not go, if my longer stay can do you either service or pleasure. What, sir [turning to me], what, Mr. Lovelace, was your expedient; —perhaps something may be offered, Madam——

She sighed, and was silent.

REVENGE, *invoked I to myself, keep thy throne in my heart. If the usurper* LOVE *once more drive thee from it, thou wilt never regain possession!*

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Lovel. What I had thought of, what I had intended to propose [and I sighed], was this, that the dear creature, if she will not forgive me, as she promised, will suspend the displeasure she has conceived against me, till Lady Betty arrives.—That lady may be the mediatrix between us. This dear creature may put herself into *her* protection, and accompany her down to her seat in Oxfordshire. It is one of her ladyship's purposes to prevail on her supposed new niece to go down with her. It may pass to every one but to Lady Betty, and to you, Captain Tomlinson, and to your friend Mr. Harlowe (as he desires) that we have been some time married: and her being with my relations will amount to a proof to James Harlowe that we *are;* and our nuptials may be privately, and at this beloved creature's pleasure, solemnised; and your report, Captain, authenticated.

Capt. Upon my honour, Madam, clapping his hand upon his breast, a charming expedient!—This will answer every end.

She mused—she was greatly perplexed—at last, God direct me! said she: I know not what to do—a young unfriended creature! Whom have I to advise with?—Let me retire, if I *can* retire.

She withdrew with slow and trembling feet, and went up to her chamber.

For Heaven's sake, said the penetrated varlet [his hands lifted up]; for Heaven's sake, take compassion upon this admirable woman!—I cannot proceed—I cannot proceed—she deserves all things——

Softly!—d—n the fellow!—the women are coming in.

He sobbed up his grief—turned about—hemmed up a more *manly* accent—Wipe thy cursed eyes—He did. The sunshine took place on one cheek, and spread slowly to the other, and the fellow had his whole face again.

The women all three came in, led by that ever-curious Miss Rawlins. I told them that the lady was gone up to consider of everything: that we had hopes of her. And such a representation we made of all that had passed, as

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brought either tacit or declared blame upon the fair perverse for hardness of heart and over-delicacy.

The widow Bevis, in particular, put out one lip, tossed up her head, wrinkled her forehead, and made such motions with her now lifted-up, now cast-down eyes, as showed that she thought there was a great deal of perverseness and affectation in the lady. Now and then she changed her censuring looks to looks of pity of me—but (as she said) she loved not to aggravate!—A poor business, *God helps!* shrugging up her shoulders, to make such a rout about! And then her eyes laughed heartily—Indulgence was a good thing! Love was a good thing!—but too much was too much!

Miss Rawlins, however, declared, after she had called the widow Bevis, with a prudish simper, a *comical gentlewoman!* that there must be something in our story which she could not fathom; and went from us into a corner and sat down, seemingly vexed that she could not.

—o—

LETTER LXX.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

THE lady stayed longer above than we wished; and I hoping that (lady-like) she only waited for an *invitation* to return to us, desired the widow Bevis, in the Captain's name (who wanted to go to town), to request the favour of her company.

I cared not to send up either Miss Rawlins or Mrs. Moore on the errand, lest my beloved should be in a *communicative disposition;* especially as she had hinted at an appeal to Miss Rawlins; who, besides, has such an unbounded curiosity.

Mrs. Bevis presently returned with an answer (winking and pinking at me) that the lady would follow her down.

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Miss Rawlins could not but offer to retire, as the others did. Her eyes, however, intimated that she had rather stay. But they not being answered as she seemed to wish, she went with the rest, but with slower feet; and had hardly left the parlour, when the lady entered it by the other door; a melancholy dignity in her person and air.

She sat down. Pray, Mr. Tomlinson, be seated.

He took his chair over against her. I stood behind hers that I might give him *agreed-upon* signals, should there be occasion for them.

As thus—a wink of the left eye was to signify *push that point, Captain.*

A wink of the right, and a nod, was to indicate *approbation* of what he had said.

My forefinger held up, and biting my lip, *get off of that as fast as possible.*

A right forward nod, and a frown, *swear to it, Captain.*

My whole spread hand, *to take care not to say too much on that particular subject.*

A scowling brow, and a positive nod, was to bid him *rise in temper.*

And these motions I could make, even those with my hand, without holding up my arm, or moving my wrist, had the women been there; as, when the motions were agreed upon, I knew not but they would.

She hemmed—I was going to speak, to spare her supposed confusion: but this lady never wants presence of mind, when presence of mind is necessary either to her honour, or to that conscious dignity which distinguishes her from all the women I ever knew.

I have been considering, said she, as well as I was able, of everything that has passed; and of all that has been said; and of my unhappy situation. I mean no ill, I wish no ill, to any creature living, Mr. Tomlinson. I have always delighted to draw favourable rather than unfavourable conclusions; sometimes, as it has proved, for very bad hearts. Censoriousness, whatever faults I have, is not *naturally* my fault.—But, circumstanced as I am, treated as I have been,

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unworthily treated, by a man who is full of contrivances, and glories in them——

Lovel. My dearest life!—But I will not interrupt you.

Cl. Thus treated, it becomes me to doubt—it concerns my honour to doubt, to fear, to apprehend—*your* intervention, sir, is so seasonable, so kind, for *this man*—my uncle's expedient, the first of the kind he ever, I believe, thought of; a plain, honest, good-minded man, as he is, not affecting such expedients—your report in conformity to it—the consequences of that report; the alarm taken by my brother; his rash resolution upon it—the alarm taken by Lady Betty, and the rest of Mr. Lovelace's relations—the *sudden* letters written to him upon it, which, with yours, he showed me—all ceremony, among persons *born observers of ceremony*, and entitled to value themselves upon *their distinction*, dispensed with—all these things have happened *so quick*, and some of them *so* seasonable——

Lovel. Lady Betty, you see, Madam, in her letter, dispenses with punctilio, avowedly in compliment to you. Charlotte, in hers, professes to do the same for the same reason. Good Heaven! that the respect intended you by my relations, who, in every other case, are really punctilious, should be thus construed! They were glad, Madam, to have an opportunity to compliment you at my expense. Every one of my family takes delight in rallying me. But their joy on the supposed occasion——

Cl. Do I doubt, sir, that you have not something to say for anything you think fit to do? I am speaking to Captain Tomlinson, sir. I will you would be pleased to withdraw—at least to come from behind my chair.

And she looked at the Captain, observing, no doubt, that his eyes seemed to take lessons from mine.

A fair match, by Jupiter!

The Captain was disconcerted. The dog had not had such a blush upon his face for ten years before. I bit my lip for vexation; walked about the room; but nevertheless took my post again; and blinked with my eyes to the Captain, as a caution for him to take more care of *his:*

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and then scowling with my brows, and giving the nod positive, I as good as said, *resent that, Captain.*

Capt. I hope, Madam, you have no suspicion that I am capable——

Cl. Be not displeased with me, Captain Tomlinson. I have told you that I am not of a suspicious temper. Excuse me for the sake of my sincerity. There is not, I will be bold to say, a sincerer heart in the world than hers before you.

She took out her handkerchief, and put it to her eyes.

I was going, at that instant, after her example, to vouch for the honesty of *my* heart; but my conscience *Mennelled* upon me; and would not suffer the meditated vow to pass my lips.—A devilish thing, thought I, for a man to be so little himself, when he has most occasion for himself!

The villain Tomlinson looked at me with a rueful face, as if he begged leave to cry for company. It might have been as well, if he *had* cried. A feeling heart, or the tokens of it given by a sensible eye, are very reputable things, when kept in countenance by the occasion.

And here let me fairly own to thee, that twenty times in this trying conversation I said to myself, that could I have thought that I should have had all this trouble, and incurred all this guilt, I would have been honest at first. But why, Jack, is this dear creature so lovely, yet so invincible?—Ever heardst thou before that the sweets of May blossomed in December?

Capt. Be pleased—be pleased, Madam—if you have any doubts of my honour——

A whining varlet! He should have been quite angry.—For what gave I him the nod positive? He should have stalked again to the window, as for his whip and hat.

Cl. I am only making such observations as my youth, my inexperience, and my present unhappy circumstances, suggest to me—a worthy heart (such, I hope, as Captain Tomlinson's) need not fear an examination—need not fear being looked into—whatever doubts *that* man, who has been the *cause of my errors*, and as my severe father imprecated, *the punisher of the errors he has caused*, might have

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had of me, or of my honour, I would have forgiven him for them, if he had fairly proposed them to me: for some doubts perhaps *such a man* might have of the future conduct of a creature whom he could induce to correspond with him against *parental prohibition*, and against the *lights which her own judgment threw in upon her:* and if he had propounded them to me like a man and a gentleman, I would have been glad of the opportunity given me to clear my intentions, and to have shown myself entitled to his good opinion—and I hope *you*, sir——

Capt. I am ready to hear all your doubts, Madam, and to clear them up——

Cl. I will only put it, sir, to your conscience and honour——

The dog sat uneasy—he shuffled with his feet—her eye was upon him—he was, therefore, after the rebuff he had met with, afraid to look at me for my motions; and now turned his eyes towards me, then from me, as if he would *unlook* his own looks.

Cl. That all is true that you have written, and that you have told me.

I gave him a right forward nod, and a frown—as much as to say, *swear to it, Captain.* But the varlet did not round it off as I would have had him. However, he averred that it was.

He had hoped, he said, that the circumstances with which his commission was attended, and what he had communicated to her, *which he could not know but from his dear friend, her uncle,* might have shielded him even from the *shadow* of suspicion. But I am contented, said he, stammering, to be thought—to be thought—what—what you please to think me—till, till, you are satisfied.

A whore's bird!

Cl. The circumstances you refer to, I must own *ought* to shield you, sir, from suspicion; but the man before you is a man that would make an angel suspected, should that angel plead for him.

I came forward,—traversed the room,—was indeed in a

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bl—dy passion.—I have no patience, Madam!—and again I bit my unpersuasive lips.

Cl. No man ought to be impatient at imputations he is not ashamed to deserve. An innocent man *will not* be outrageous upon such imputations. A guilty man *ought not*. [Most excellently would this charming creature cap sentences with Lord M.!] But I am not now trying you, sir [to me], on the foot of your *merits*. I am only sorry that I am constrained to put questions to this *worthier* gentleman [*worthier* gentleman, Jack!] which, perhaps, I ought not to put, so far as they regard *himself*. And I hope, Captain Tomlinson, that you, who know not Mr. Lovelace so well, as to my unhappiness I do, and who have children of your own, will excuse a poor young creature who is deprived of all worldly protection, and who has been insulted and endangered by the most *designing man in the world*, and perhaps *by a confederacy of his creatures*.

There she stopt; and stood up, and looked at me; fear, nevertheless, apparently mingled with her anger.—And so it ought. I was glad, however, of this poor sign of love; no one fears whom they value not.

Women's tongues were licensed, I was going to say; but my conscience would not *let* me call her a *woman*; nor use to her so vulgar a phrase. I could only rave by my motions, lift up my eyes, spread my hands, rub my face, pull my wig, and look like a fool. Indeed, I had a great mind to run mad. Had I been alone with her, I would; and she should have taken consequences.

The Captain interposed in my behalf; gently, however, and as a man not quite sure that he was himself acquitted. Some of the pleas we had both insisted on he again enforced; and speaking low, Poor gentleman! said he, who can but pity him? Indeed, Madam, it is easy to see, with all his failings, the power you have over him!

Cl. I have no pleasure, sir, in distressing any one; not even *him*, who has so much distressed *me*. But, sir, when I THINK, and when I see him before me, I cannot command my temper! Indeed, indeed, Captain Tomlinson, Mr. Love-

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lace *has not acted by me* either as a grateful or a generous man, nor even as a *prudent* one!—He knows not, as I told him yesterday, the value of the heart he has insulted!

There the angel stopt; her handkerchief at her eyes.

O Belford, Belford! that she should so greatly excel, as to make me, at times, appear as a villain in my own eyes!

I besought her pardon. I promised that it should be the study of my whole life to deserve it. My faults, I said, *whatever* they had been, were rather faults in her *apprehension* than in *fact*. I besought her to give way to the expedient I had hit upon—I repeated it. The Captain enforced it, for her uncle's sake. I, once more, for the sake of the general reconciliation; for the sake of all my family; for the sake of preventing further mischief.

She wept. She seemed staggered in her resolution—she turned from me. I mentioned the letter of Lord M. I besought her to resign to Lady Betty's mediation all our differences, if she would not forgive me *before* she saw her.

She turned towards me—she was going to speak; but her heart was full, and again she turned away her face; then, half turning it to me, her handkerchief at her eyes,—And do you *really* and *indeed* expect Lady Betty and Miss Montague?—And do you—again she stopt.

I answered in a solemn manner.

She turned from me her whole face, and paused, and seemed to consider. But, in a passionate accent, again turning towards me [Oh, how difficult, Jack, for a Harlowe spirit to forgive!]: Let her Ladyship come, if she pleases, said she, I cannot, cannot, wish to *see* her; and if I did see her, and she were to plead for you, I cannot wish to *hear* her! The more I *think*, the less I can forgive an attempt that I am convinced was intended to *destroy* me. [A plaguy strong word for the occasion, supposing she was right!] What has my conduct been, that an insult of *such* a nature should be offered to me, and it would be a *weakness* in me to forgive? I am sunk in my own eyes! And how can I receive a visit that must depress me more?

The Captain urged her in my favour with greater earnest-

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ness than before. We both even clamoured, as I may say, for mercy and forgiveness. [Didst thou never hear the good folks talk of taking Heaven by storm?]—Contrition repeatedly avowed; a total reformation promised; the happy expedient again urged.

Cl. I have taken my measures. I have gone too far to recede, or to *wish* to recede. My mind is prepared for adversity. That I have not *deserved* the evils I have met with is my consolation; I have written to Miss Howe what my intentions are. My heart is not *with you*—it is *against* you, Mr. Lovelace. I had not written to you as I did in the letter I left behind me, had I not resolved, whatever became of me, to renounce you for ever.

I was full of hope now. Severe as her expressions were, I saw she was afraid that I should think of what she had written. And indeed her letter is violence itself.—*Angry people, Jack, should never write while their passion holds.*

Lovel. The severity you have shown me, Madam, whether by pen or by speech, shall never have place in my remembrance, but for your *honour*. In the light you have taken things, all is deserved, and but the natural result of virtuous resentment; and I adore you, even for the pangs you have given me.

She was silent. She had employment enough with her handkerchief at her eyes.

Lovel. You lament, sometimes, that you have no friends of your own sex to consult with. Miss Rawlins, I must confess, is too inquisitive to be confided in [I liked not, thou mayest think, her appeal to Miss Rawlins]. She *may mean* well. But I never in my life knew a person who was fond of prying into the secrets of others, that was fit to be trusted. The curiosity of such is governed by pride, which is not gratified but by whispering about a secret till it becomes public, in order to show either their consequence or their sagacity. It is so in every case. What man or woman, who is *covetous* of *power* or of *wealth*, is covetous of either for the sake of making a right use of it? But in the ladies of my family you *may* confide. It is their ambi-

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tion to think of you as one of themselves. Renew but your consent to pass *to the world*, for the sake of your uncle's expedient, and for the prevention of mischief, as a lady some time married. Lady Betty may be acquainted with the naked truth; and you may (*as she hopes you will*) accompany her to her seat; and, if it *must* be so, consider me as in a state of penitence or probation, to be accepted or rejected, as I may appear to deserve.

The Captain again clapt his hands on his breast, and declared, upon his honour, that this was a proposal that, were the case that of his own daughter, and she were not resolved upon *immediate* marriage (which yet he thought by far the more eligible choice), he should be very much concerned were she to refuse it.

Cl. Were I with Mr. Lovelace's relations, and to pass as his wife to the world, I could not have any choice. And how could he be then in a state of probation?—O Mr. Tomlinson, you are too much his *friend* to see into his drift.

Capt. His friend, Madam, as I said before, as I am *yours* and your *uncle's*, for the sake of a general reconciliation, which must begin with a better understanding between yourselves.

Lovel. Only, my dearest life, resolve to attend the arrival and visit of Lady Betty; and permit her to arbitrate between us.

Capt. There can be no harm in *that*, Madam. You can suffer no inconvenience from *that*. If Mr. Lovelace's offence be such that a woman of Lady Betty's character judges it to be unpardonable, why then——

Cl. [Interrupting; and to me.] If I am not invaded by you, sir; if I am (as I ought to be) my own mistress, I think to stay here, in this *honest house* [and then had I an *eye-beam*, as the Captain calls it, flashed at me], till I receive a letter from Miss Howe. That, I hope, will be in a day or two. If in that time the ladies come whom you expect, and if they are desirous to see the creature whom you have made unhappy, I shall know whether I can or cannot receive their visit.

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She turned short to the door, and, retiring, went up stairs to her chamber.

Oh, sir, said the Captain, as soon as she was gone, what an angel of a woman is this! I *have been*, and I *am* a very wicked man. But if anything should happen amiss to this admirable lady, through *my* means, I shall have more cause for self-reproach than for all the bad actions of my life put together.

And his eyes glistened.

Nothing can happen amiss, thou sorrowful dog!—What *can* happen amiss? Are we to form our opinion of things by the romantic notions of a girl who supposes *that* to be the greatest which is the slightest of evils? Have I not told thee our whole story? Has she not broken her promise? Did I not generously spare her, when in my power? I was decent, though I had her at such advantage.—Greater liberties have I taken with girls of character at a common romping 'bout, and all has been laughed off, and handkerchief and head-clothes adjusted, and petticoats shaken to rights, in my presence. Never man, in the like circumstances, and resolved as I was resolved, goaded on as I was goaded on, as well by her own sex as by the impulses of a violent passion, was ever so decent. Yet what mercy does she show me?

Now, Jack, this pitiful dog was such another unfortunate one as thyself—his arguments serving to confirm me in the very purpose he brought them to prevail upon me to give up. Had he left me to myself, to the tenderness of my own nature, moved as I was when the lady withdrew, and had he set down, and made odious faces, and said nothing—it is very possible that I should have taken the chair over against him, which she had quitted, and have cried and blubbered with him for half an hour together. But the varlet to *argue* with me!—to pretend to *convince* a man, who knows in his heart that he is doing a wrong thing!—He must needs think that this would put me upon trying what I could say for myself; and when the excited compunction can be carried from the *heart* to the *lips* it must evaporate in words.

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Thou, perhaps, in this place, wouldst have urged the same pleas that he urged. What I answered to him therefore may do for thee, and spare *thee* the trouble of writing, and *me* of reading, a good deal of nonsense.

Capt. You were pleased to tell me, sir, that you only proposed *to try her virtue;* and that you believed you should actually marry her.

Lovel. So I shall, and cannot help it. I have no doubt but I shall. And as to *trying* her, is she not now in the height of her trial? Have I not reason to think that she is coming about? Is she not now yielding up her resentment for an attempt which she thinks she ought *not* to forgive? And if she do, may she not forgive the *last attempt?*—Can she, in a word, resent *that* more than she does *this?* Women often, for their own sakes, will keep the *last secret;* but will ostentatiously din the ears of gods and men with their clamours upon a successless offer. It was my folly, my weakness, that I gave her not more cause for this her unsparing violence!

Capt. Oh, sir, you will never be able to subdue this lady without force.

Lovel. Well, then, puppy, must I not endeavour to find a proper time and place——

Capt. Forgive me, sir! but can you think of force to such a fine creature?

Lovel. Force, indeed, I abhor the thought of; and for what, thinkest thou, have I taken all the pains I have taken, and engaged so many persons in my cause, but to avoid the necessity of *violent* compulsion? But yet, imaginest thou that I expect *direct consent* from such a lover of forms as this lady is known to be! Let me tell thee, M'Donald, that thy master, Belford, has urged on thy side of the question all that thou canst urge. Must I have every sorry fellow's conscience to pacify, as well as my own?—By my soul, Patrick, she has a friend *here* [clapping my hand on my breast] that pleads for her with greater and more irresistible eloquence than all the men in the world can plead for her. And had she *not escaped me*—And yet how have

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I answered my first design of trying her,* and in *her* the virtue of the most virtuous of the sex?—Perseverance, man! —Perseverance!—What! wouldest thou have me decline a trial that may make for the honour of a sex we all so dearly love?

Then, sir, you have no thoughts—no thoughts—[looking still more sorrowfully] of marrying this wonderful lady?

Yes, yes, Patrick, but I have. But let me, first, to gratify *my* pride, bring down *hers*. Let me see that she loves me well enough to forgive me for my *own* sake. Has she not heretofore lamented that she stayed not in her father's house, though the consequence must have been, if she *had*, that she would have been the wife of the odious Solmes? If now she be brought to consent to be mine, seest thou not that the *reconciliation* with her *detested relations* is the *inducement*, as it *always* was, and not *love* of *me?*—Neither her virtue nor her love can be established but upon full trial; the *last* trial—but if her resistance and resentment be such as hitherto I have reason to expect they will be, and if I find in that resentment less of hatred of *me* than of the *fact*, then shall she be mine in her own way. Then, hateful as is the *life of shackles* to me, will I *marry her*.

Well, sir, I can only say that I am dough in your hands, to be moulded into what shape you please. But if, as I said before——

None of thy *Said befores*, Patrick. I remember all thou saidst—and I know all thou canst *further* say—thou art only, Pontius Pilate like, washing thine own hands (don't I know thee?) that thou mayest have something to silence thy conscience with by loading me. But we have gone too far to recede. Are not all our engines in readiness? Dry up thy sorrowful eyes. Let unconcern and heart's ease once more take possession of thy solemn features. Thou hast hitherto performed extremely well.—Shame not thy *past* by thy *future* behaviour; and a rich reward awaits thee. If thou *art* dough *be* dough; and I slapt him on the shoulder—resume but thy former shape, and I'll be answerable for the event.

* See vol. ii. Letter XXXIII.

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He bowed assent and compliance; went to the glass; and began to untwist and unsadden his features; pulled his wig right, as if that, as well as his head and heart had been discomposed by his compunction, and once more became old Lucifer's and mine.

But didst thou think, Jack, that there was so much—what shall I call it?—in this Tomlinson? Didst thou imagine that such a fellow as that had bowels? That nature, so long dead and buried in him, as to all humane effects, should thus revive and exert itself?—Yet why do I ask this question of thee, who, to my equal surprise, hast shown, on the same occasion, the like compassionate sensibilities?

As to Tomlinson, it looks as if poverty had made him the wicked fellow *he* is; as plenty and wantonness have made us what *we* are. *Necessity*, after all, is the test of principle. But what is there in this dull word, or thing, called HONESTY, that even I, who cannot in my present views be served by it, cannot help thinking even the accidental emanations of it amiable in Tomlinson, though demonstrated in a *female case*; and judging *better of him* for being capable of such?

—o—

LETTER LXXI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

THIS debate between the Captain and me was hardly over when the three women, led by Miss Rawlins, entered, hoping no intrusion, but very desirous, the maiden said, to know if we were likely to accommodate.

Oh yes, I hope so. You know, ladies, that your sex must, in these cases, preserve their forms. They must be courted to comply with their own happiness. A lucky expedient we have hit upon. The uncle has his doubts of our marriage. He cannot believe, nor will anybody, that it is possible that a man so much in love, the lady so desirable——

They all took the hint. It was a very extraordinary case, the two widows allowed. Women, Jack [as I believe I

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have observed* elsewhere], have a high opinion of what they can do for us. Miss Rawlins desired, if I pleased, to let them know the expedient; and looked as if there was no need to proceed in the rest of my speech.

I begged that they would not let the lady know I had told them what this expedient was; and they should hear it.

They promised.

It was this: that to oblige and satisfy Mr. Harlowe, the ceremony was to be *again performed.* He was to be *privately present,* and to give his niece to me with his own hands—and she was retired to consider of it.

Thou seest, Jack, that I have provided an excuse, to save my veracity to the women here, in case I should incline to marriage, and she should choose to have Miss Rawlins's assistance at the ceremony. Nor doubted I to bring my fair one to save my credit on this occasion, if I could get her to consent to be mine.

A charming expedient! cried the widow. They were all three ready to clap their hands for joy upon it. Women love to be married twice at least, Jack; though not indeed to the *same man.* And all blessed the reconciliatory scheme and the proposer of it; and, supposing it came from the Captain, they looked at him with pleasure, while his face shined with the applause implied. He should think himself very happy, if he could bring about a general reconciliation; and he flourished with his head like my man Will. on his victory over old Grimes; bridling by turns, like Miss Rawlins in the height of a prudish fit.

But now it was time for the Captain to think of returning to town, having a great deal of business to despatch before morning. Nor was he certain that he should be able again to attend us at Hampstead before he went home.

And yet, as everything was drawing towards a crisis, I did not intend that he should leave Hampstead that night.

A message to the above effect was carried up, at my desire, by Mrs. Moore; with the Captain's compliments, and to know if she had any commands for him to her uncle?

* See Letter LIX. of this volume.

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But I hinted to the women, that it would be proper for them to withdraw, if the lady did come down; lest she should not care to be so free before *them* on a proposal so particular, as she would be to *us*, who had offered it to her consideration.

Mrs. Moore brought down word that the lady was following her. They all three withdrew; and she entered at one door, as they went out at the other.

The Captain accosted her, repeating the contents of the message sent up; and desired that she would give him her commands in relation to the report he was to make to her uncle Harlowe.

I know not what to say, sir, nor what I would have *you* to say, to my uncle—perhaps you may have business in town—perhaps you need not see my uncle till I have heard from Miss Howe; till after Lady Betty—I don't know what to say.

I implored the return of that value which she had so generously acknowledged once to have had for me. I presumed, I said, to flatter myself that Lady Betty, in her own person, and in the name of all my family, would be able, on my promised reformation and contrition, to prevail in my favour, especially as our prospects in other respects with regard to the general reconciliation wished for were so happy. But let me owe to *your own generosity*, my dearest creature, said I, rather than to the mediation of *any person on earth*, the forgiveness I am a humble suitor for. How much more agreeable to *yourself*, oh, best beloved of my soul, must it be, as well as *obliging to me*, that your first personal knowledge of my relations, and theirs of you (for they will not be denied attending you), should not be begun in recriminations, in appeals? As Lady Betty will be here soon, it will not perhaps be possible for you to receive her visit with a brow absolutely serene. But, dearest, dearest creature, I beseech you, let the misunderstanding pass as a slight one—as a misunderstanding cleared up. Appeals give pride and superiority to the persons appealed to, and are apt to lessen the appellant, not only in their eye, but in her own. Exalt

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not into judges those who are prepared to take lessons and instructions from you. The individuals of my family are as proud as I am said to be. But they will cheerfully resign to your superiority—you will be the first woman of the family in every one's eyes.

This might have done with any other woman in the world but *this;* and yet she is the only woman in the world of whom it may with truth be said. But thus, angrily, did she disclaim the compliment.

Yes, indeed!—[and there she stopt a moment, her sweet bosom heaving with a noble disdain]—cheated out of myself from the very first!—A fugitive from my own family! Renounced by my relations! Insulted by you!—Laying humble claim to the protection of yours!—Is not this the light in which I must appear not only to the ladies of your family, but to all the world?—Think you, sir, that in these circumstances, or even had I been in the *happiest,* that I could be affected by this plea of undeserved superiority?—You are a stranger to the mind of Clarissa Harlowe, if you think her capable of so poor and so *undue* a pride!

She went from us to the farther end of the room.

The Captain was again affected—Excellent creature! I called her; and reverently approaching her, urged farther the plea I had last made.

It is but lately, said I, that the opinions of my relations have been more than indifferent to me, whether good or bad; and it is for *your* sake, more than for *my own,* that I now wish to stand well with my whole family. The principal motive of Lady Betty's coming up, is to purchase presents for the whole family to make on the happy occasion.

This consideration, turning to the Captain, with so noble-minded a dear creature, I know, can have no weight; only as it will show their value and respect. But what a damp would their worthy hearts receive, were they to find their admired new niece, as they now think her, not only *not* their niece, but capable of renouncing me for ever! They love me. They *all* love me. I have been guilty of carelessness and levity to them, indeed; but of carelessness and

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levity only; and *that* owing to a pride that has set me above meanness, though it has not done everything for me.

My whole family will be guaranties for my good behaviour to this dear creature, their niece, their daughter, their cousin, their friend, their chosen companion and directress, all in one.—Upon my soul, Captain, we *may*, we *must* be happy.

But, dearest, dearest creature, let me on my knees [and down I dropt, her face all the time turned half from me, as she stood at the window, her handkerchief often at her eyes], on my knees let me plead your *promised* forgiveness; and let us not appear to them, on their visit, thus unhappy with each other. Lady Betty, the next hour that she sees you, will write her opinion of you, and of the likelihood of our future happiness, to Lady Sarah her sister, a weak-spirited woman who now hopes to supply to herself, in my bride, the lost daughter she still mourns for!

The Captain then joined in, and re-urged her uncle's hopes and expectations, and his resolution effectually to set about the general reconciliation; the mischief that might be prevented; and the certainty that there was that her uncle might be prevailed on to give her to me with his own hand, if she made it her choice to wait for his coming up. But, for his own part, he humbly advised, and fervently pressed her, to make the very next day, or Monday at farthest, my happy day.

Permit me, dearest lady, said he, and I could kneel to you myself [bending his knee], though I have no interest in my earnestness, but the pleasure I should have to be able to serve you all, to beseech you to give me an opportunity to assure your uncle that I myself saw with my own eyes the happy knot tied!—All misunderstandings, all doubts, all diffidences, will then be at an end.

And what, Madam, rejoined I, still kneeling, can there be in your new measures, be they what they will, that can so happily, so *reputably* I will presume to say, for all around, obviate the present difficulties?

Miss Howe herself, if she love you, and if she love your

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fame, Madam, urged the Captain, his knee still bent, must congratulate you on such a happy conclusion.

Then turning her face, she saw the Captain half kneeling —Oh, sir! Oh, Captain Tomlinson!—Why this *undue* condescension? extending her hand to his elbow, to raise him. I cannot bear this!—Then casting her eye on me, Rise, Mr. Lovelace—kneel not to the poor creature whom you have insulted!—How cruel the occasion for it!—And how mean the submission!

Not mean to such an angel!—Nor can I rise but to be forgiven!

The Captain then re-urged once more the day—he was amazed, he said, if she ever valued me——

Oh, Captain Tomlinson, interrupted she, how much are you the friend of this man!—*If I had never valued him, he never would have had it in his power to insult me;* nor could I, if I had never regarded him, have *taken to heart as I do,* the insult (execrable as it was) so undeservedly, so ungratefully given—but let him retire—for a moment let him retire.

I was more than half afraid to trust the Captain by himself with her. He gave me a sign that I might depend upon him. And then I took out of my pocket his letter to me, and Lady Betty's, and Miss Montague's, and Lord M.'s letters (which last she had not then seen); and giving them to him, procure for me, in the first place, Mr. Tomlinson, a re-perusal of these three letters; and of *this* from Lord M. And I beseech you, my dearest life, give them due consideration: and let me on my return find the happy effects of that consideration.

I then withdrew; with slow feet, however, and a misgiving heart.

The Captain insisted upon this re-perusal previously to what she had to say to him, as he tells me. She complied, but with some difficulty; as if she was *afraid* of being *softened in my favour.*

She lamented her unhappy situation; destitute of friends, and not knowing whither to go, or what to do. She asked questions, *sifting questions,* about her uncle, about her

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family, and after what he knew of Mr. Hickman's fruitless application in her favour.

He was well prepared in this particular; for I had shown him the letters and extracts of letters of Miss Howe, which I had so happily come at.* Might she be assured, she asked him, that her brother, with Singleton and Solmes, were actually in quest of her?

He averred that they were.

She asked if he thought I had hopes of prevailing on her to go back to town?

He was sure I had not.

Was he really of opinion that Lady Betty would pay her a visit?

He had no doubt of it.

But, sir; but, Captain Tomlinson—[impatiently turning from him, and again to him] I know not what to do—but were I *your* daughter, sir—were *you* my own father—Alas! sir, I have neither father nor mother!

He turned from her and wiped his eyes.

Oh, sir! you have humanity! [She wept too.] There are some men in the world, thank Heaven, that *can* be moved. Oh, sir, I have met with hard-hearted men—in my own family too—or I could not have been so unhappy as I am—but I make everybody unhappy!

His eyes no doubt ran over.—

Dearest Madam! Heavenly Lady!—Who can—who can—hesitated and blubbered the dog, as he owned. And indeed I heard some part of what passed, though *they both* talked lower than I wished; for, from the nature of *their* conversation, there was no room for altitudes.

THEM, and BOTH and THEY!—How it goes against me to include this angel of a creature, and any man on earth but myself, in *one* word!

Capt. Who can forbear being affected?—But, Madam, you can be no other man's.

Cl. Nor would I be. But he is so sunk with me!—To fire the house!—An artifice so vile!—contrived for the

* See Letter XXIV. of this volume.

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worst of purposes!—Would you have a daughter of yours —But what would I say?—Yet you see that I have nobody in whom I can confide!—Mr. Lovelace is a vindictive man! —He could not love the creature whom he could insult as he has insulted me!

She paused. And then resuming—in short, I never, never can forgive *him*, nor he *me*.—Do you think, sir, I would have gone so far as I have gone, if I had intended ever to draw with him in one yoke?—I left behind me *such* a letter——

You know, Madam, he has acknowledged the justice of your resentment——

Oh, sir, he can acknowledge, and he can retract, fifty times a day—but do not think I am trifling with myself and you, and want to be *persuaded* to forgive him, and to be *his*. There is not a creature of my sex, who would have been *more explicit*, and *more frank*, than I would have been, from the moment I *intended* to be his, had I had a heart like my own to deal with. I was always *above reserve*, sir, I will presume to say, where I had no cause of doubt. Mr. Lovelace's conduct has made me appear, perhaps, *over-nice*, when my heart wanted to be *encouraged* and *assured!* and when, if it had been so, my whole behaviour would have been governed by it.

She stopt; her handkerchief at her eyes.

I inquired after the minutest part of her behaviour, as well as after her words. I love, thou knowest, to trace human nature, and more particularly female nature, through its most secret recesses.

The pitiful fellow was lost in silent admiration of her. And thus the noble creature proceeded.

It is the fate in unequal unions, that tolerable creatures, through them, frequently incur censure, when more happily yoked they might be entitled to praise. And shall I not shun a union with a man, that might lead into errors a creature who flatters herself that she is blest with an inclination to be good; and who wishes to make every one happy with whom she has any connection, even to her very servants?

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She paused, taking a turn about the room—the fellow, devil fetch him, a mummy all the time.—Then proceeded:

Formerly, indeed, I hoped to be an humble mean of reforming him. But when I have *no such hope,* is it right [you are a serious man, sir] to make a venture that shall endanger *my own morals?*

Still silent was the varlet. If my advocate had nothing to say for me, what hope of carrying my cause?

And now, sir, what is the result of all?—It is this—that you will endeavour, if you have that influence over him which a man of your sense and experience ought to have, to prevail upon him, and that for *his own* sake, as well as for *mine,* to leave me free to pursue my own destiny. And of this you may assure him, that I never will be any other man's.

Impossible, Madam! I know that Mr. Lovelace would not hear me with patience on such a topic. And I do assure you that I have *some spirit,* and should not care to take an indignity from him or from any man living.

She paused—then resuming—and think you, sir, that my uncle will refuse to receive a letter from me? [*How averse, Jack, to concede a tittle in my favour!*]

I know, Madam, as matters are circumstanced, that he would not *answer* it. If you please I will carry one down from you.

And will he not pursue his intentions in *my* favour, nor be himself reconciled to me, except I am married?

From what your brother gives out, and affects to believe, on Mr. Lovelace's living with you in the same——

No more, sir—I am an unhappy creature!

He then re-urged that it would be in her power instantly, or on the morrow, to put an end to all her difficulties.

How can that *be?* said she: the license *still* to be obtained? The settlements *still* to be signed? Miss Howe's answer to my last *unreceived?*—And shall I, sir, be in such a HURRY, as if I thought my *honour in danger if I delayed?* Yet *marry* the man from whom only it *can* be endangered! —Unhappy, thrice unhappy Clarissa Harlowe!—In how

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many difficulties has one rash step involved thee!—And she turned from him and wept.

The varlet, by way of comfort, wept too: yet her tears, as he might have observed, were tears that indicated rather a *yielding* than a *perverse* temper.

There is a sort of stone, thou knowest, so soft in the quarry, that it may in manner be cut with a knife; but if the opportunity be not taken, and it is exposed to the air for any time, it will become as hard as marble, and then with difficulty it yields to the chisel.* So this lady, not taken at the moment, after a turn or two across the room, gained more resolution! and then she declared, as she had done once before, that she would wait the issue of Miss Howe's answer to the letter she had sent her from hence, and take her measures accordingly—leaving it to him meantime to make what report he thought fit to her uncle—the kindest that *truth* could bear, she doubted not from Captain Tomlinson: and she should be glad of a few lines from him, to hear what *that* was.

She wished him a good journey. She complained of her head; and was about to withdraw: but I stept round to the door next the stairs, as if I had but just come in from the garden (which, as I entered, I called a very pretty one) and took her reluctant hand as she was going out: My dearest life, you are not going?—What hopes, Captain?—Have you not some hopes to give me of pardon and reconciliation?

She said she would not be detained. But I would not let her go till she had promised to return, when the Captain had reported to me what her resolution was.

And when he had, I sent up and claimed her promise; and she came down again, and repeated (as what she was determined upon) that she would wait for Miss Howe's answer to the letter she had written to her, and take her measures according to its contents.

I expostulated with her upon it, in the most submissive and earnest manner. She made it necessary for me to repeat

* The nature of the Bath stone, in particular.

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many of the pleas I had before urged. The Captain seconded me with equal earnestness. At last, each fell down on our knees before her.

She was distressed. I was afraid at one time she would have fainted. Yet neither of us would rise without some concessions. I pleaded my own sake; the Captain, his dear friend, her uncle's; and *both* repleaded the prevention of future mischief; and the peace and happiness of the two families.

She owned herself unequal to the conflict. She sighed. She sobbed. She wept. She wrung her hands.

I was perfectly eloquent in my vows and protestations. Her tearful eyes were cast down upon me; a glow upon each charming cheek; a visible anguish in every lovely feature—at last, her trembling knees seeming to fail her, she dropped into the next chair; her charming face, as if seeking for a hiding-place (which a mother's bosom would have best supplied), sinking upon her own shoulder.

I forgot at the instant all my vows of revenge. I threw myself at her feet, as she sat; and snatching her hand, pressed it with my lips. I besought Heaven to forgive my past offences, and prosper my future hopes, as I designed honourably and justly by the charmer of my heart, if once more she should restore me to her favour. And I thought I felt drops of scalding water [could they be tears?] trickle down upon my cheeks; while my cheeks, glowing like fire, seemed to scorch up the unwelcome strangers.

I then arose, not doubting of an *implied* pardon in this silent distress. I raised the Captain. I whispered him—by my soul, man, I am in earnest.—Now talk of reconciliation, of her uncle, of the license, of settlement—and raising my voice, If now at last, Captain Tomlinson, my angel will give me leave to call so great a blessing mine, it will be impossible that you should say too much to her uncle in praise of my gratitude, my affection, and fidelity to his charming niece; and he may begin as soon as he pleases his kind schemes for effecting the desirable reconciliation!—Nor shall he prescribe any terms to me that I will not comply with.

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The Captain blessed me with his eyes and hands—Thank God! whispered he. We approached the lady together.

Capt. What hinders, dearest Madam, what now hinders, but that Lady Betty Lawrance, when she comes, may be acquainted with the truth of everything? And that then she may assist privately at your nuptials? I will stay till they are celebrated; and then shall go down with the happy tidings to my dear Mr. Harlowe. And all will, all must, soon be happy.

I must have an answer from Miss Howe, replied the still trembling fair one. I cannot change my new measures but with her advice. I will forfeit all my hopes of happiness in this world, rather than forfeit her good opinion, and that she should think me giddy, unsteady, or precipitate. All I shall further say on the present subject is this, that, when I have her answer to what I *have* written, I will write to her the whole state of the matter, as I shall then be enabled to do.

Lovel. Then must I despair for ever!—O Captain Tomlinson, Miss Howe hates me!—Miss Howe——

Capt. Not so perhaps—when Miss Howe knows your concern for having offended, she will never advise that, with such prospects of general reconciliation, the hopes of so many considerable persons in both families should be frustrated. Some little time, as this excellent lady has foreseen and hinted, will necessarily be taken up in actually procuring the license, and in perusing and signing the settlements. In that time Miss Howe's answer may be received; and Lady Betty may arrive; and she, no doubt, will have weight to dissipate the lady's doubts, and to accelerate the day. It shall be my part, meantime, to make Mr. Harlowe easy. All I fear from delay is from Mr. James Harlowe's quarter; and therefore all must be conducted with prudence and privacy: as your uncle, Madam, has proposed.

She was silent, I rejoiced in her silence. The dear creature, thought I, has actually forgiven me in her heart!—But why will she not lay me under obligation to her, by the generosity of an explicit declaration?—And yet, as that would not accelerate anything, while the license is not in

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my hands, she is the less to be blamed (if I do her justice) for taking more time to *descend.*

I proposed, as on the morrow night, to go to town; and doubted not to bring the license up with me on Monday morning; would she be pleased to assure me that she would not depart from Mrs. Moore's.

She should stay at Mrs. Moore's till she had an answer from Miss Howe.

I told her that I hoped I might have her *tacit* consent at least to the obtaining of the license.

I saw by the turn of her countenance that I should not have asked this question. She was so far from *tacitly* consenting, that she declared to the contrary.

As I never intended, I said, to ask her to enter again into a house, with the people of which she was so much offended, would she be pleased to give orders for her clothes to be brought up hither? Or should Dorcas attend her for any of her commands on that head?

She desired not ever more to see anybody belonging to that house. She might perhaps get Mrs. Moore or Mrs. Bevis to go thither for her, and take her keys with them.

I doubted not, I said, that Lady Betty would arrive by that time. I hoped she had no objection to my bringing that lady and my cousin Montague up with me?

She was silent.

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, said the Captain, the lady can have no objection to this.

She was still silent. So silence in this case was assent.

Would she be pleased to write to Miss Howe?

Sir! Sir! peevishly interrupting—no more questions; no prescribing to me—you will do as you think fit—so will I, as I please. I own no obligation to you. Captain Tomlinson, your servant. Recommend me to my uncle Harlowe's favour. And was going.

I took her reluctant hand, and besought her only to promise to meet me early in the morning.

To what purpose meet you? Have you more to say than has been said? I have had enough of vows and protestations

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Mr. Lovelace. To what purpose should I meet you to-morrow morning?

I repeated my request, and that in the most fervent manner, naming six in the morning.

"You know that I am always stirring before that "hour, at this season of the year," was the half-expressed consent.

She then again recommended herself to her uncle's favour; and withdrew.

And thus, Belford, has she *mended her markets,* as Lord M. would say, and I worsted mine. Miss Howe's next letter is now the hinge on which the fate of both must turn. I shall be absolutely ruined and undone, if I cannot intercept it.

—o—

LETTER LXXII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday, Midnight.

No rest, says a text that I once heard preached upon, *to the wicked*—and I cannot close my eyes (yet only wanted to compound for half an hour in an elbow-chair)—so must scribble on.

I parted with the Captain after another strong debate with him in relation to what is to be the fate of this lady. As the fellow has an excellent head, and would have made an eminent figure in any station of life, had not his early days been tainted with a deep crime, and he detected in it; and as he had the right side of the argument; I had a good deal of difficulty with him; and at last brought myself to promise, that if I could prevail upon her generously to forgive me, and to reinstate me in her favour, I would make it my whole endeavour to get off of my contrivances, as happily as I could (only that Lady Betty and Charlotte *must come*); and then substituting him for her uncle's proxy, take shame to myself, and marry.

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But if I should, Jack (with the strongest antipathy to the state that ever man had), what a figure shall I make in rakish annals? And can I have taken all these pains for nothing? Or for a wife only, that, however excellent [and *any* woman, do I think I could make good, because I could make any woman *fear* as well as *love* me], might have been obtained without the plague I have been at, and much more reputably than with it? And hast thou not seen that this haughty woman [forgive me that I call her *haughty!* and a *woman!* Yet is she not haughty?] knows not how to forgive with graciousness? Indeed has not at all forgiven me? But holds my soul in a *suspense* which has been so grievous to her own.

At this silent moment, I think, that if I were to pursue my former scheme, and resolve to try whether I cannot make a greater fault serve as a sponge to wipe out the less; and then be forgiven for that; I can justify myself to *myself;* and that, as the fair invincible would say, is all in all.

As it is my intention, in all my reflections, to avoid repeating, at least dwelling upon, what I have before written to thee, though the state of the case may not have varied; so I would have thee to re-consider the *old* reasonings (particularly those contained in my answer to thy last* expostulatory nonsense); and add the *new* as they fall from my pen; and then I shall think myself invincible;—at least, as arguing rake to rake.

I take the gaining of this lady to be essential to my happiness; and is it not natural for *all* men to aim at obtaining whatever they think will make them happy, be the object more or less considerable in the eyes of others?

As to the manner of endeavouring to obtain her, by falsification of oaths, vows, and the like—do not the poets of two thousand years and upwards tell us that Jupiter laughs at the perjuries of lovers? And let me add, to what I have heretofore mentioned on that head, a question or two.

Do not the mothers, the aunts, the grandmothers, the governesses of the pretty innocents, always, from their very

* See Letter XLIX. of this volume.

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cradles to riper years, preach to them the deceitfulness of men?—That they are not to regard their oaths, vows, promises?—What a parcel of fibbers would all these reverend matrons be, if there were not now and then a pretty credulous rogue taken in for a justification of their preachments, and to serve as a beacon lighted up for the benefit of the rest?

Do we not then see that an honest prowling fellow is a necessary evil on many accounts? Do we not see that it is highly requisite that a sweet girl should be now and then drawn aside by him?—And the more eminent the girl, in the graces of person, mind, and fortune, is not the example likely to be the more efficacious?

If these *postulata* be granted me, who, I pray, can equal my charmer in all these? Who therefore so fit for an example to the rest of the sex?—At worst, I am entirely within my worthy friend Mandeville's assertion, that *private vices are public benefits.*

Well, then, if this sweet creature must *fall*, as it is called, for the benefit of all the pretty fools of the sex, she *must;* and there's an end of the matter. And what would there have been in it of uncommon or rare, had I not been so long about it?—And so I dismiss all further argumentation and debate upon the question: and I impose upon thee, when thou writest to me, an eternal silence on this head.

Wafered on, as an after-written introduction to the paragraphs which follow, marked with turned commas [*thus,* "]:

Lord, Jack, what shall I do now! How one evil brings on another! Dreadful news to tell thee! While I was meditating a simple robbery, here have I (in my own defence indeed) been guilty of murder!—A bl—y murder! So I believe it will prove. At her last gasp!—Poor impertinent opposer!—Eternally resisting!—Eternally contradicting! There she lies weltering in her blood! her death's wound have I given her!—But she was a thief, an impostor, as well as a tormentor. She had stolen my pen. While I was sullenly meditating, doubting, as to my future measures, she

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stole it; and thus she wrote with it in a hand exactly like my own; and would have faced me down that it was really my own handwriting.

"But let me reflect before it be too late. On the mani-
"fold perfections of this ever amiable creature let me reflect.
"The hand yet is only held up. The blow is not struck.
"Miss Howe's next letter may blow thee up. In policy
"thou shouldest be now at least honest. Thou canst not
"live without her. Thou wouldest rather marry her than
"lose her absolutely. Thou mayest undoubtedly prevail
"upon her, inflexible as she seems to be, for marriage. But
"if now she find thee a villain, thou mayest never more
"engage her attention, and she perhaps will refuse and
"abhor thee.

"Yet already have I not gone too far? Like a repentant
"thief, afraid of his gang, and obliged to go on, in fear of
"hanging till he comes to be hanged, I am afraid of the
"gang of my cursed contrivances.

"As I hope to live, I am sorry (at the present writing)
"that I have been such a foolish plotter, as to put it, as I
"fear I have done, out of my *own power* to be honest. I
"hate compulsion in all forms; and cannot bear, even to
"be *compelled* to be the wretch my choice has made me!
"So now, Belford, as thou hast said, I am a machine at last,
"and no free agent.

"Upon my soul, Jack, it is a very foolish thing for a man
"of spirit to have brought himself to such a height of
"iniquity, that he must proceed, and cannot help himself,
"and yet to be next to certain, that this very victory will
"undo him.

"Why was such a woman as this thrown into my way,
"whose very fall will be her glory, and perhaps not only
"my shame but my destruction?

"What a happiness must that man know, who moves
"regularly to some laudable end, and has nothing to reproach
"himself with in his progress to it! When, by honest
"means, he attains his end, how great and unmixed must
"be his enjoyments! What a happy man, in this particular

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" case, had I been, had it been given me to *be* only what I " wished to *appear* to be!"

Thus far had my *conscience* written with my pen; and see what a recreant she had made of me!—I seized her by the throat—*There!*—*There*, said I, thou vile impertinent!—take *that*, and *that!*—How often have I given thee warning!—and now, I hope, thou intruding varletess, have I done thy business!

Puling and low-voiced, rearing up thy detested head, in vain implorest thou *my* mercy, who, in *thy* day hast showed me so little!—Take *that*, for a rising blow!—And now will *thy* pain, and *my* pain from *thee*, soon be over. Lie there!—Welter on!—Had I not given thee thy death's wound, thou wouldest have robbed me of all my joys. Thou couldest not have mended me, 'tis plain. Thou couldest only have thrown me into despair. Didst thou not see that I had gone too far to recede?—Welter on, once more I bid thee!—Gasp on!—*That* thy last gasp, surely!—How hard diest thou!

ADIEU!—Unhappy man! ADIEU!

'Tis kind in thee, however, to bid me *Adieu!*

Adieu, Adieu, Adieu, to thee, oh, thou inflexible, and, till now, unconquerable bosom intruder!—Adieu to thee for ever!

—o—

LETTER LXXIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday Morning (June 11) four o'clock.

A FEW words to the verbal information thou sentest me last night concerning thy poor old man; and then I rise from my seat, shake myself, refresh, new-dress, and so to my charmer, whom, notwithstanding her reserves, I hope to prevail upon to walk out with me on the Heath this warm and fine morning.

The birds must have awakened her before now. They are in full song. She always gloried in accustoming herself

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to behold the sun rise—one of God's natural wonders, as once she called it.

Her window salutes the east. The valleys must be gilded by his rays, by the time I am with her; for already have they made the uplands smile, and the face of nature cheerful.

How unsuitable wilt thou find this gay preface to a subject so gloomy as that I am now turning to!

I am glad to hear thy tedious expectations are at last answered.

Thy servant tells me that thou art plaguily grieved at the old fellow's departure.

I can't say but thou mayest *look* as if thou wert; harassed as thou hast been for a number of days and nights with a close attendance upon a dying man, beholding his drawing-on hour—pretending, for decency's sake, to whine over his excruciating pangs; to be in the way to answer a thousand impertinent inquiries after the health of a man thou wishedst to die—to pray by him—for so once thou wrotest to me!—To read by him—to be forced to join in consultation with a crew of solemn and parading doctors, and their officious zanies, the apothecaries, joined with the butcherly tribe of scarificators; all combined to carry on the physical farce, and to cut out thongs both from his flesh and his estate—to have the superadded apprehension of dividing thy interest in what he shall leave with a crew of eager hoping, never to be satisfied relations, legatees, and the devil knows who, of private gratifiers of passions laudable and illaudable—in these circumstances, I wonder not that thou lookest before servants (as little grieved at heart as thyself, and who are gaping after legacies, as thou after *heirship*), as if thou indeed wert grieved; and as if the most wry-faced woe had befallen thee.

Then, as I have often thought, the reflection that must naturally arise from such mortifying objects, as the death of one with whom we have been familiar, must afford, when we are obliged to attend it in its slow approaches, and in its face-twisting pangs, that it will one day be our own case, goes a great way to credit the appearance of grief.

And this it is that, seriously reflected upon, may tem-

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porally give a fine air of sincerity to the wailings of lively widows, heart-exulting heirs, and residuary legatees of all denominations; since, by keeping down the inward joy, those interesting reflections must sadden the aspect, and add an appearance of real concern to the assumed sables.

Well, but, now thou art come to the reward of all thy watchings, anxieties, and close attendances, tell me what it is; tell me if it compensate thy trouble, and answer thy hope?

As to myself, thou seest, by the gravity of my style, how the subject has helped to mortify me. But the necessity I am under of committing either speedy matrimony, or a rape, has saddened over my gayer prospects, and more than the case itself, contributed to make me sympathise with thy present joyful sorrow.

Adieu, Jack, I must be soon out of my pain; and my Clarissa shall be soon out of hers—for so does the arduousness of the case require.

—o—

LETTER LXXIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday Morning.

I HAVE had the honour of my charmer's company for two complete hours. We met before six in Mrs. Moore's garden. A walk on the Heath refused me.

The sedateness of her aspect and her kind compliance in this meeting gave me hopes. And all that either the Captain or I had urged yesterday to obtain a full and free pardon, that re-urged I; and I told her, besides, that Captain Tomlinson was gone down with hopes to prevail upon her uncle Harlowe to come up in person, in order to present to me the greatest blessing that man ever received.

But the utmost I could obtain was, that she would take no resolution in my favour till she received Miss Howe's next letter.

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I will not repeat the arguments I used; but I will give thee the substance of what she said in answer to them.

She had considered of everything, she told me. My whole conduct was before her. The house I carried her to must be a vile house. The people early showed what they were capable of, in the earnest attempt made to fasten Miss Partington upon her; as she doubted not, with my approbation. [Surely, thought I, she has not received a duplicate of Miss Howe's letter of detection!] They heard her cries. My insult was undoubtedly premeditated. By my whole recollected behaviour to her, previous to it, it must be so. I had the vilest of views, no question. And my treatment of her put it out of all doubt.

Soul all over, Belford! She seems sensible of liberties that my passion made me insensible of having taken, or she could not so deeply resent.

She besought me to give over all thoughts of her. Sometimes, she said, she thought herself cruelly treated by her nearest and dearest relations; at *such* times, a spirit of repining and even of resentment took place; and the reconciliation, at other times so desirable, was not then so much the favourite wish of her heart, as was the scheme she had formerly planned—of taking her good Norton for her directress and guide, and living upon her own estate in the manner her grandfather had intended she should live.

This scheme she doubted not that her cousin Morden, who was one of her trustees for that estate, would enable her (and that, as she hoped, without litigation) to pursue. And if he can, and does, what, sir, let me ask you, said she, have I seen in your conduct, that should make me prefer to it a union of interest, where there is such a disunion in minds?

So thou seest, Jack, there is *reason*, as well as *resentment*, in the preference she makes against me!—Thou seest that she presumes to think that she can be happy *without* me; and that she must be unhappy *with* me!

I had besought her, in the conclusion of my re-urged arguments, to write to Miss Howe before Miss Howe's answer could come, in order to lay before her the present

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state of things; and if she *would* pay a deference to her judgment, to let her have an opportunity to give it, on the full knowledge of the case——

So I would, Mr. Lovelace, was the answer, if I were in doubt myself, which I would prefer—marriage, or the scheme I have mentioned. You cannot think, sir, but the latter must be my choice. I wish to part with you with temper —don't put me upon repeating——

Part with me, Madam! interrupted I—I cannot bear those words!—But let me beseech you, however, to write to Miss Howe. I hope, if Miss Howe is not my enemy——

She is not the enemy of your *person*, sir;—as you would be convinced, if you *saw her last letter* * *to me*. But were she not an enemy to your *actions*, she would not be *my* friend, nor the friend of *virtue*. Why will you provoke from me, Mr. Lovelace, the harshness of expression which, however deserved by you, I am unwilling just now to use, having suffered enough in the two past days from my own vehemence?

I bit my lip for vexation. And was silent.

Miss Howe, proceeded she, knows the full state of matters already, sir. The answer I expect from her respects *myself*, not *you*. Her heart is too warm in the cause of friendship, to leave me in suspense one moment longer than is necessary as to what I want to know. Nor does her answer absolutely depend upon herself. She must see a person first, and that person perhaps see others.

The cursed smuggler-woman, Jack!—Miss Howe's Townsend, I doubt not!—Plot, contrivance, intrigue, stratagem! —Underground-moles these women—but let the earth cover me!—let me be a mole too, thought I, if they carry their point!—and if this lady escape me now!

She frankly owned that she had once thought of embarking *out of all our ways* for some one of our American colonies. But now that she had been *compelled* to see me (which had been her greatest dread, and which she would had given her life to avoid), she thought she might

* The lady innocently means Mr. Lovelace's forged one. See Letter LXV. of this volume.

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be happiest in the resumption of her former favourite scheme, if Miss Howe could find her a reputable and private asylum, till her cousin Morden could come.—But if he came not soon, and if she had a difficulty to get to a place of refuge, whether from her brother or from *anybody else* [meaning me, I suppose], she might yet perhaps go abroad; for, to say the truth, she could not think of returning to her father's house, since her brother's rage, her sister's upbraidings, her father's anger, her mother's still more affecting sorrowings, and her own consciousness under them all, would be unsupportable to her.

O Jack! I am sick to death, I pine, I die, for Miss Howe's next letter! I would bind, gag, strip, rob, and do anything but murder, to intercept it.

But determined as she seems to be, it was evident to me, nevertheless, that she had still some tenderness for me.

She often wept as she talked, and much oftener sighed. She looked at me twice with an eye of *undoubted* gentleness, and three times with an eye *tending* to compassion and softness; but its benign rays were as often *snatched* back, as I may say, and her face averted, as if her sweet eyes were not to be trusted, and could not stand against my eager eyes; seeking, as they did, for a lost heart in hers, and endeavouring to penetrate to her very soul.

More than once I took her hand. She struggled not *much* against the freedom. I pressed it once with my lips —she was not *very* angry. A frown indeed—but a frown that had more distress in it than indignation.

How came the dear soul (clothed as it is with such a silken vesture) by all its steadiness? * Was it necessary that the active gloom of such a tyrant of a *father* should commix with such a passive sweetness of a will-less *mother*, to produce a constancy, an equanimity, a steadiness, in the *daughter*, which never woman before could boast of? If so, she is more obliged to that despotic father than I could

* See vol. i. Letters IX. XIV. and XIX. for what she herself says on that steadiness which Mr. Lovelace, though a *deserved* sufferer by it, cannot help admiring.

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have imagined a creature to be, who gave distinction to every one related to her beyond what the crown itself can confer.

I hoped, I said, that she would admit of the intended visit, which I had so often mentioned, of the two ladies.

She was *here*. She had seen *me*. She could not help herself at present. She ever had the highest regard for the ladies of my family, because of their worthy characters. There she turned away her sweet face, and vanquished a half-risen sigh.

I kneeled to her then. It was upon a verdant cushion; for we were upon the grass walk. I caught her hand. I besought her with an earnestness that called up, as I could feel, my heart to my eyes, to make me, by her forgiveness and example, more worthy of them, and of her own kind and generous wishes. By my soul, Madam, said I, you stab me with your goodness—your undeserved goodness! and I cannot bear it!

Why, why, thought I, as I did several times in this conversation, will she not *generously* forgive me? Why will she make it necessary for me to bring Lady Betty and my cousin to my assistance? Can the fortress expect the same advantageous capitulation, which yields not to the summons of a resistless conqueror, as if it gave not the trouble of bringing up and raising its heavy artillery against it?

What *sensibilities*, said the divine creature, withdrawing her hand, must thou have suppressed! What a dreadful, what a judicial hardness of heart must thine be! who canst be capable of such emotions, as sometimes thou hast shown; and of such sentiments, as sometimes have flowed from thy lips; yet canst have so far overcome them all as to be able to act as thou hast acted, and that from settled purpose and premeditation; and this, as it is said, throughout the whole of thy life, from infancy to this time!

I told her that I had hoped, from the generous concern she had expressed for me, when I was so suddenly and dangerously taken ill—[the ipecacuanha experiment, Jack!]

She interrupted me—Well have you rewarded me for the concern you speak of!—However, I will frankly own,

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now that I am determined to think no more of you, that you might (unsatisfied as I nevertheless was with you) have made an interest——

She paused. I besought her to proceed.

Do you suppose, sir, and turned away her sweet face as we walked,—Do you suppose that I had not thought of laying down a plan to govern myself by, when I found myself so unhappily over-reached and cheated, as I may say, out of myself—When I found that I could not *be*, and *do*, what I wished *to be*, and *to do*, do you imagine that I had not cast about what was the *next* proper course to take?—And do you believe that this *next* course has not cost me some pain to be obliged to——

There again she stopt.

But let us break off discourse, resumed she. The subject grows too—she sighed—Let us break off discourse—I will go in—I will prepare for church—[The devil! thought I.] Well, as I *can* appear in those everyday worn clothes—looking upon herself—I will go to church.

She then turned from me to go into the house.

Bless me, my beloved creature, bless me with the continuance of this affecting conversation.—Remorse has seized my heart!—I have been excessively wrong—give me further cause to curse my heedless folly, by the continuance of this calm but soul-penetrating conversation.

No, no, Mr. Lovelace: I have said too much. Impatience begins to break in upon me. If you can excuse me to the ladies, it will be better for my mind's sake, and for your credit's sake, that I do not see them. Call me to *them* over-nice, petulant, prudish—what you please call me to them. Nobody but Miss Howe, to whom, next to the Almighty, and my own mother, I wish to stand acquitted of wilful error, shall know the whole of what has passed. Be happy, as you may!—*Deserve* to be happy, and happy you will be, in your own reflection at least, were you to be ever so unhappy in other respects. For myself, if I shall be enabled, on due reflection, to look back upon my own conduct, without the great reproach of having wilfully, and

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against the light of my own judgment, erred, I shall be more happy than if I had all that the world accounts desirable.

The noble creature proceeded; for I could not speak.

This self-acquittal, when spirits are lent me to dispel the darkness which at present too often overclouds my mind, will, I hope, make me superior to all the calamities that can befal me.

Her whole person was informed by her sentiments. She seemed to be taller than before. How the God within her exalted her, not only above me, but above herself!

Divine creature! (as I *thought* her) I *called* her. I acknowledged the superiority of her mind; and was proceeding—but she interrupted me—All human excellence, said she, is comparative only. My mind, I believe, is indeed superior to yours, debased as yours is by evil habits: but I had not known it to be so, if you had not *taken pains* to convince me of the inferiority of yours.

How great, how sublimely great, this creature!—By my soul, I cannot forgive her for her virtues! There is no bearing the consciousness of the infinite inferiority she charged me with.—But why will she break from me, when good resolutions are taking place? The red-hot iron she refuses to strike—Oh, why will she suffer the yielding wax to harden?

We had gone but a few paces towards the house, when we were met by the impertinent women, with notice that breakfast was ready. I could only, with uplifted hands, beseech her to give me hope of a renewed conversation after breakfast.

No—she would go to church.

And into the house she went, and upstairs directly. Nor would she oblige me with her company at the tea-table.

I offered, by Mrs. Moore, to quit both the table and the parlour, rather than she should exclude herself, or deprive the two widows of the favour of her company.

That was not all the matter, she told Mrs. Moore. She had been struggling to keep down her temper. It had cost her some pains to do it. She was desirous to compose herself, in hopes to receive benefit by the divine worship she was going to join in.

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Mrs. Moore hoped for her presence at dinner.

She had rather be excused. Yet, if she could obtain the frame of mind she hoped for, she might not be averse to show, that she had got above those sensibilities, which gave consideration to a man who deserved not to be to her what he had been.

This said, no doubt, to let Mrs. Moore know that the garden-conversation had not been a reconciling one.

Mrs. Moore seemed to wonder that we were not upon a better foot of understanding, after so long a conference; and the more, as she believed that the lady had given in to the proposal, for the repetition of the ceremony, which I had told them was insisted upon by her uncle Harlowe.—But I accounted for this, by telling both widows that she was resolved to keep on the reserve till she heard from Captain Tomlinson, whether her uncle would be present in person at the solemnity, or would name that worthy gentleman for his proxy.

Again I enjoined strict secrecy, as to this particular; which was promised by the widows, as well for themselves, as for Miss Rawlins; of whose taciturnity they gave me such an account, as showed me that she was *secret keeper general* to all the women of fashion at Hampstead.

The Lord, Jack! What a world of mischief, at this rate, must Miss Rawlins know!—What a Pandora's box must her bosom be!—Yet, had I nothing that was more worthy of my attention to regard, I would engage to open it, and make my uses of the discovery.

And now, Belford, thou perceivest that all my reliance is upon the mediation of Lady Betty and Miss Montague, and upon the hope of intercepting Miss Howe's next letter.

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LETTER LXXV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

The fair inexorable is actually gone to church with Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bevis; but Will. closely attends her

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motions; and I am in the way to receive any occasional intelligence from him.

She did not *choose* [a mighty word with the sex! as if they were *always* to have their own wills!] that I should wait upon her. I did not much press it, that she might not apprehend that I thought I had reason to doubt her voluntary return.

I once had it in my head to have found the widow Bevis other employment. And I believe she would have been as well pleased with my company as to go to church; for she seemed irresolute when I told her that two out of a family were enough to go to church for one day. But having her things on (as the women call everything), and her aunt Moore expecting her company, she thought it best to go—*lest it should look oddly, you know,* whispered she, to one who was above regarding how it looked.

So here am I in my dining-room; and have nothing to do but to write till they return.

And what will be my subject, thinkest thou? Why, the old beaten one to be sure; self-debate—through temporary remorse: for the blow being not struck, her guardian angel is redoubling his efforts to save her.

If it be not *that* [and yet what power should *her* guardian angel have over *me?*] I don't know what it is that gives a check to my revenge, whenever I meditate treason against so sovereign a virtue. Conscience is dead and gone, as I told thee; so it cannot be that. A young conscience growing up, like the phœnix, from the ashes of the old one, it cannot be, surely. But if it were, it would be hard, if I could not overlay a young conscience.

Well, then, it must be LOVE, I fancy. LOVE itself, inspiring love of an object so adorable—some little attention possibly paid likewise to thy whining arguments in her favour.

Let LOVE then be allowed to be the moving principle; and the rather, as LOVE naturally makes the lover loth to disoblige the object of its flame; and knowing that an offence of the *meditated* kind will be a mortal offence to her, cannot bear that I should think of giving it.

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Let LOVE and me talk together a little on this subject—be it a *young conscience,* or *love,* or *thyself,* Jack, thou seest that I am for giving every whiffler audience. But this must be the last debate on this subject; for is not her fate in a manner at its crisis? And must not my next step be an irretrievable one, tend it which way it will?

AND now the debate is over.

A thousand charming things (for LOVE is gentler than CONSCIENCE), has this little urchin suggested in her favour. He pretended to know both our hearts: and he would have it, that though my love was a prodigious strong and potent love; and though it has the merit of many months faithful service to plead, and has had infinite difficulties to struggle with; yet that it is not THE RIGHT SORT OF LOVE.

Right sort of love!—A puppy!—But with due regard to your deityship, said I, what merits has she with YOU, that *you* should be of her party? Is *hers,* I pray you, a *right sort of love?* Is it *love* at all? She don't *pretend* that it is. She owns not your sovereignty. What a d——l moves *you,* to plead thus earnestly for a rebel who despises your power?

And then he came with his *ifs* and *ands*—and it would *have been,* and *still,* as he believed, would be, love, and a love of the exalted kind, if I would encourage it by the *right sort of love* he talked of: and, in justification of his opinion, pleaded her own confessions, as well those of yesterday as of this morning, and even went so far back as to my ipecacuanha illness.

I never talked so familiarly with his godship before: thou mayest think, therefore, that this dialect sounded oddly in my ears. And then he told me how often I had thrown cold water upon the most charming flame that ever warmed a lady's bosom, while but young and rising.

I required a definition of this *right sort* of love, he tried at it: but made a sorry hand of it: nor could I, for the soul of me, be convinced that what he meant to extol was LOVE.

Upon the whole, we had a noble controversy upon this subject, in which he insisted upon the *unprecedented merit* of the lady. Nevertheless I got the better of him; for he was struck

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absolutely dumb, when (waving her present perverseness, which yet was a sufficient answer to all his pleas) I asserted, and offered to prove it, by a thousand instances *impromptu*, that love was not governed by *merit*, nor could be under the dominion of *prudence*, or any other *reasoning power:* and if the lady were capable of love, it was of such a sort of love *as he had nothing to do with*, and which never before reigned in a female heart.

I asked him what he thought of her flight from me, at a time when I was more than half overcome by the *right sort of love* he talked of?—and then I showed him the letter she wrote, and left behind her for me, with an intention, no doubt, absolutely to break my heart, or to provoke me to hang, drown, or shoot myself; to say nothing of a multitude of declarations from her, defying his power, and imputing all that looked like love in her behaviour to me, to the persecution and rejection of her friends; which made her think of me but as a last resort.

LOVE then gave her up. The letter, he said, deserved neither pardon nor excuse. He did not think he had been pleading for such a *declared* rebel. And as to the rest, he should be a betrayer of the rights of his own sovereignty, if what I had alleged were true, and he were still to plead for her.

I swore to the truth of all. And *truly* I swore: which perhaps I do not always do.

And now what thinkest thou must become of the lady, whom LOVE itself gives up, and CONSCIENCE cannot plead for?

END OF VOL. III.

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